

Meat, fish and poultry weighing and pricing

Trading Standards Information

www.southwark.gov.uk

1. Main legal requirements

The requirements that apply depend upon whether the food is 'pre-packed' or not. Pre-packed means that the food has been put in a wrapper, packet or other container before any retail sales take place.

Non pre-packed means the food is sold loose from bulk, for example where customers can choose a particular weight or piece of meat or fish from a quantity on display.

- ***For pre-packed meat, fish & poultry;***

The 'net weight' **must** be marked on the container. Net weight means the weight of the food only.

- ***For non pre-packed meat, fish & poultry;***

The sale **must** be by weight. In such cases it is easiest for retailers to sell by the net weight.

All measurements of weight or measure **must** be given in metric units. Imperial ones can be shown in addition to these. There are also special price marking requirements which are detailed in section 5.

Gross weight sales are permitted providing the container or bag used is not too heavy. Contact us for details of the prescribed container weight limits for sales by gross weight.

2. What is a sale by weight?

A sale by weight may be achieved by informing the customer of the weight of the food **before** they pay for, or receive it. This is best done by weighing the food in front of the customer and any such weighing must be carried out so that the customer can see the scales and its indications. Alternatively the weight may be marked on a wrapper, or on a notice close to the food.

3. What if the customer requests some trimming, boning or other preparation?

Some customers do not understand that the purchase price may be based on the unprepared weight of the food, and mistakenly think they have been given short weight. Make sure that the customer knows the weight before preparation and ask them if they want the bones or trimmings.

If the customer asks for the food to be prepared before they are weighed then you must make the prepared weight known to them.

4. What are the main exceptions?

When not pre-packed the following do not have to be sold by weight;

- Cooked poultry
- Pies
- Jellied, pickled or fried fish
- Shellfish in shell
- Single cooked sausages weighing less than 500g
- Scotch Eggs and other sausage meat products sold as single items

If you do choose to sell these products by weight then any equipment used to weigh them must be of an approved type and 'stamped' by an Inspector of Weights and Measures. Further details are contained in our information leaflet called Weighing & Measuring Equipment.

If you sell any fish products by volume then you must use metric units and any equipment used to measure them must be of an approved type and 'stamped' by an Inspector of Weights and Measures.

5. What are the special price marking requirements?

- *For non pre-packed meat, fish & poultry;*

If meat fish or poultry is weighed or measured out in the presence of the purchaser, the unit price per kilogram **must** be indicated in writing, for example '£2.16 per kg. This may be accompanied by a supplementary imperial unit price indication, in this example '98p per lb'.

If the food is not weighed or measured in the presence of the purchaser then the selling price **must** be shown but remember you still need to make the weight known as detailed in section 2.

Cooked or ready-to-eat meat including game and poultry and cooked or ready-to-eat fish, seafood and crustacea may be unit priced by reference to a price per 100 grams (just under a quarter pound (¼ lb).

- *For pre-packed meat, fish & poultry;*

If the foods are pre-packaged in the same quantities, for example trays of chicken breasts all weighing 750g, then the selling price **must** be shown.

If the quantity of food in each package is not the same, for example meat joints of varying weights, then a unit price per kg **must** be shown as well as the selling price for the pack. The **actual selling price** must be calculated by reference to the unit price and the quantity. It is not acceptable to have a 'flash' or 'value tray' price unless that price relates by calculation to the indicated unit price and net weight.

All prices should be shown as described in our leaflet 'Price indications for goods'.

6. What happens if I don't comply with these selling requirements?

These requirements exist to enable fair competition between businesses and to help consumers. They are detailed in Regulations and Orders made under the Weights and Measures Act 1985 and the Prices Act 1974. Failure to comply could result in goods and scales being forfeited and prosecution. On conviction the Courts may impose a fine of up to £5000.

7. Further information

If you require further assistance on the selling requirements, or would like additional information leaflets, please contact us at the address given.