

County Sealers of Weights & Measures

California consumers have received protection from the use of false weights and measures since 1915 when the state's legislature established that each county shall have a Sealer of Weights and Measures. In most counties since 1970, the functions of the County Sealer of Weights and Measures have been combined with those of the County Agricultural Commissioner. Under the general direction of the Secretary of Food and Agriculture through the Division of Measurement Standards (DMS), and in cooperation with various federal, state, and local jurisdictions, the County Sealer inspects, tests, and certifies to the accuracy of numerous devices, functions and activities associated with commerce.

Functions and Activities



County weights and measures officials (Sealers) serve all consumers as the local regulatory agency authorized to enforce the California Business and Professions Code and the California Code of Regulations pertaining to issues of "Equity in the Marketplace". This enforcement efficiently and effectively protects local commerce, thus encouraging stability in the State's economy. Sealers annually perform thousands of inspections on various commercial devices, check packages for net content, review weighmaster records for accuracy, provide training and education to busi-

nesses and individuals, in addition to any number of other activities designed to assure "Equity in the Marketplace." In virtually any transaction you may make, your weights and measures official serves as the "third party" protecting both business and the consumer.

Commercial Devices



"Commercial" devices are those used in channels of trade to determine a value based on weight, measure, or count. It is the duty of the County Sealer to assure an equitable marketplace where the accuracy and appropriate use of such devices is sustained. County Sealers test the performance of commercial devices using standards that are traceable to world standards in order to maintain uniformity. The type of device is also inspected for suitability for their application and use. Once determined that the device will be used correctly and is accurate, the inspector affixes a paper seal certifying the device is "correct".

County Sealers inspect and test various types of weighing and measuring devices, including: gasoline dispensers, propane/butane meters, taxi meters, odometers on ambulances, farm milk tanks, pharmacy scales, deli counter scales, livestock scales, concrete batch plant scales, truck scales, etc. Sealers inspect approximately 282,000 such devices in California each year.

Quantity Control

Ensuring equity in the marketplace involves more than certifying a device's capability of giving precise measurements. Whenever a specified volume of consumer goods is placed in a container or package its "net content" is required to be stated on the package label (net content meaning the measured amount of consumer goods contained, excluding the package). Using approved statistical procedures Sealers inspect the net content of packaged goods to determine if the proper weight, measure, or count is being used at wholesale as well as in retail sales. Packages found deficient are removed from sale. Additionally, packages are examined for compliance with the basic labeling requirements set in federal guidelines. Sealers also "test purchases" to verify that consumers are charged accurately and correctly. These "test purchases" include check stand surveys to insure accurate scanner pricing.

Petroleum Products

Petroleum advertising and labeling regulations strictly enforced by County Sealers provide product identity and information to the seller as well as the buyer. Test samples are randomly purchased to verify compliance with quality standards established by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE). Undercover purchases are one of the many tools available to investigate consumer complaints and to evaluate compliance with the applicable laws and regulations.

Weighmaster

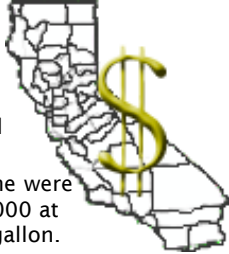
Virtually all of commerce is dependent upon the functions of weighmasters. Weighmasters are persons licensed by the DMS to certify the weighed, measured, or counted quantity of any commodity whenever both parties to the transaction are not present at the time that quantity is determined. Weighmasters issue certificates as a record indicating the amount, as well as how and where the quantity was determined. These "weighmaster certificates" are recognized as legal documentation of the quantities determined and indicated thereon. Businesses and individuals rely upon the information contained as being "certifiably" accurate as the basis of payment in their transactions. In the event of any disputes of such magnitude, courts of law rely on these certificates as a foundation for determining settlement.

Specific criteria are established in the law for weighmasters to follow when issuing weighmaster certificates. Sealers conduct audit inspections of thousands of weighmaster records to verify correctness and completeness of the required information. Compliance with established weighmaster procedures is determined from these audit inspections, as well as "under-cover" weighing inspections. In many cases, Sealers work in cooperation with the DMS to offer training to ensure the correctness of weighmaster certificates issued. The actions taken by Sealers help prevent/reduce costly errors and fraudulent business practices. It is a misdemeanor to ask a weighmaster to issue a false or fraudulent weighmaster certificate.

Service Agents

Each company and person who sells, rents, installs, services, or repairs commercial weighing and measuring devices is required to be licensed with DMS as a Service Agency (company) or a Service Agent (person). Licensing requirements of Service Agents helps to maintain the integrity of the service/repair industry. Agencies/agents must report their work to County Sealers. County Sealers review the work of Service Agents, thus validating their accuracy and verifying the appropriate use of devices.

- California's economic value ranks 7th among the nations of the world.
- Minor shortages to the consumer can very quickly add up to major losses.
- 14.5 billion gallons of gasoline were sold in California in the year 2000 at an average price of \$1.63 per gallon.
- If each ten-gallon purchase of gas shorted California consumers only 4 cents, the annual loss to consumers would be \$58,000,000!
- The annual cost of California's Weights and Measures program protecting each consumer would be less than the price of a typical candy bar.



Liquid Measure

3 teaspoons . . . . .	. . . . .	1 tablespoon
2 tablespoons . . . . .	. . . . .	1 ounce
8 ounces . . . . .	. . . . .	1 cup
2 cups . . . . .	. . . . .	1 pint
2 pints . . . . .	. . . . .	1 quart
4 quarts . . . . .	. . . . .	1 gallon
31 - 1/2 gallons	1 barrel

Long Measure

12 inches	1 foot
3 feet	1 yard
5 - 1/2 yards	1 rod
5, 280 feet	1 mile

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" That Equity May Prevail "

**California Agricultural Commissioners
and
Sealers Association**

Protection and Service Since 1915