

This guidance note explains how the **Weights and Measures (Guernsey and Alderney) Law 1991** applies to weighing or measuring equipment which is used to buy or sell goods.

## Equipment Covered

Some examples of the types of equipment covered by the Law include:

1. the scales in a butcher's shop, grocer, jeweller or chemist
2. a petrol pump on a forecourt
3. a length measure for selling fabric or ribbon
4. the weighbridge used to calculate the charge for dumping a certain weight of rubbish and
5. the beer glasses and spirit measures in a bar.

## What Equipment can be Used?

Virtually all such equipment must be **passed as fit for use for trade** and stamped by a Trading Standards Officer (also known as an Inspector of Weights and Measures) to show that it is suitable for such use, and is accurate.

The scales and other types of equipment which are suitable for use for trade must be of a design which has been approved by the

National Measurement Office or an equivalent body in another European country. Kitchen and bathroom scales are not stampable and therefore cannot be used for trade purposes.

For guidance on equipment which can be used for making up packages of goods **before** they are made available to the customer, see our separate leaflet on **'Packaged Goods'**.

## What Does the Stamp Look Like?

The stamp is usually found on a lead plug or seal on weighing machines, and on lead seals on equipment such as petrol pumps. You may have seen one etched on a beer or wine glass. Most equipment in use for trade in Guernsey and Alderney will have been stamped either on the island or in the UK, and so the stamp will look like this:

### The Guernsey Stamp



### The UK Stamp



In addition to the symbols pictured above, the stamp often includes numbers and the date on which it was passed. You may also see weighing equipment which has been stamped by means of stickers. Such equipment may also be used for trade, but may also require verification by our Trading Standards Service before use in Guernsey.



Note the number shown can be different. Measuring equipment, such as length measures or beer glasses may be marked with the CE mark, the M mark and number.

## Maintaining Accuracy

After equipment has been stamped, it may become inaccurate through accidental damage, ordinary wear and tear, or for other reasons. Weighing machines can often be inaccurate for one of two simple and avoidable reasons:

**Out of Level** – many weighing machines are sensitive to this. They are fitted with a spirit level and levelling feet, and should be checked regularly, particularly after the machine has been moved or cleaned.

**Balance** – the machine does not start from zero. Many electronic machines have a ‘balance’ key, but if it does not rectify the problem, you should call your service organisation. **Do not** attempt to compensate by guesswork!

## Enforcement

As well as stamping weighing and measuring equipment before it is used for trade, Trading Standards Officers visit premises regularly and without notice, and test equipment. However, the trader is responsible for ensuring his/her equipment remains accurate at all times. **The operator and customer indicators must be clearly visible at all times.**

If equipment is found to be inaccurate, non-compliant or altered since it was stamped, the Officer may **reject** it by obliterating the stamp and replacing it with a six-pointed star. In this case, the equipment must not be used again until it has been repaired and **re-stamped**.

Alternatively, if the inaccuracy is not serious, the Officer may issue a **notice** requiring that the equipment be repaired within a set period of time. In this case, re-stamping is not normally required.

The Law also prohibits other activities relating to weighing equipment, such as:

**Tampering with the stamp** (by persons other than Trading Standards Officers, or other than in the course of repairs);

Using equipment which is **false or unjust**;

Using equipment to commit **fraud**.

**It is recommended that you contact Trading Standards before buying any equipment to ensure that it complies with the current legislation.**

## Important Note

*This leaflet is a guide to the Law, but is not an authoritative interpretation of the Law, which is ultimately a matter for the Courts.*

*While every care has been taken in preparation the States of Guernsey cannot accept any liability in law for its contents or interpretation.*

For further advice on this and other matters please contact Trading Standards



States of Guernsey  
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# Weighing And Measuring Equipment

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