

Units of measurement

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This guidance is for England, Scotland and Wales

Metric units

If you are indicating units of weight or volume, only the permitted abbreviations (symbols) can be used. These are shown in the table below.

Metric measurements

Unit of measurement	Symbol
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metre	m
centimetre	cm
millimetre	mm
square metre	m ²
cubic metre	m ³
litre	l or L
centilitre	cl or cL
millilitre	ml or mL
tonne	t
kilogram	kg
gram	g
milligram	mg

Vulgar fractions are not permitted (unless it relates to a fraction of a pint). For example, 500 g cannot be expressed as $\frac{1}{2}$ kg.

If the word 'net' is used it cannot be abbreviated.

Supplementary imperial units

Imperial units can be shown as well, but they must not be more prominent than the metric indication. The permitted units are shown in the table below.

Imperial measurements

Unit of measurement	Abbreviation
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gallon	gal
quart	qt
pint	pt
fluid ounce	fl oz
pound	lb
ounce	oz

Except where the law and trade practice dictates otherwise, liquids should be marked with a volume (ml or L, for example) and other products by weight (g, kg, etc).

Under the Weights and Measures (Quantity Marking and Abbreviations of Units) Regulations 1987, quantity indications must be easily visible, legible, and indelible; they must also be of a minimum height, depending on the pack size.

Penalties

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement & penalties'.

Key legislation

Weights and Measures (Quantity Marking and Abbreviations of Units) Regulations 1987

Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006

Food Information Regulations 2014

New guidance: April 2020

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to legislation can be found on each link's 'More Resources' tab.

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