There are a number of legal requirements that greengrocers need to be aware of when selling products by weight (whether at the request of customers or prepacked ready for sale), which include weighing equipment construction and quantity price marking. For example, using a "Government stamped" scale (as they are known), pricing and selling in metric quantities, and marking prepacked goods with the weight of the product.

Customers must be informed of the weight before paying for and receiving their goods. In general all foods, whether sold loose from bulk or prepacked, must be priced in a manner that can be seen by customers without them having to ask.

There are also specific requirements relating to 'bag and box' or 'seasonal selection' schemes where a variety of different items are placed together in a container for a sale or delivery to customers.

Weights & measures requirements

In relation to the greengrocery trade weights and measures legislation applies to the sale of fresh fruit and vegetables as harvested, cleaned, trimmed or divided into parts and includes shelled peas and cooked beetroot.

In general, fresh fruit and vegetables must be sold by the kilogram, subject to some exemptions, which are
Prepacked fruit and vegetables must have the net weight of the product marked on the container.

Non-prepacked items, including products selected from a larger bulk as requested by the customer, must be sold either by net weight or by gross weight if the weight of the bag, wrapper or container in which the product is served is not greater than that allowed for in table A below.

Note:

- **net weight** means the weight of the goods alone without the bag, wrapper or container
- **gross weight** means the weight of the goods plus the weight of any bag, wrapper or container

### Tables of container weights

#### Table A: weights for fruit and vegetables other than soft fruit and mushrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross weight</th>
<th>Permitted weight of container</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 500 g</td>
<td>5 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 500 g</td>
<td>a weight at the rate of 10 g per kg of the gross weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table B: weights for soft fruit and mushrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross weight</th>
<th>Permitted weight of container</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 250 g</td>
<td>a weight at the rate of 120 g per kg of the gross weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between &gt; 250 g and 1 kg</td>
<td>a weight at the rate of 100 g per kg of the gross weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between &gt; 1 kg and 3 kg</td>
<td>a weight at the rate of 90 g per kg of the gross weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 3 kg</td>
<td>a weight at the rate of 60 g per kg of the gross weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weighing

Scales that are used must be accurate and of an approved construction for retail sale use, and have certain required markings and stamps on them. See 'Weighing equipment for legal use' for more information.
The customer must be informed of the weight of the product and the price before paying for it. This can be done by:

- weighing the product in front of the customer so that they have a clear view of the weight indication on the scales
- marking the weight on the bag, wrapper or container
- marking the weight on a separate ticket or till receipt

**Average quantity**

This guide is intended for traditional greengrocer businesses supplying products at the request of customers.

If your business also prepares large quantities of prepacked products in set quantities - for example, 5 kg packs of potatoes - you may wish to take advantage of packing them using the average-quantity system, which makes allowances for small variations in package weights.

For more information on this system please see 'Packaged goods: average quantity'. You may also wish to seek specific advice from your local trading standards service.

**Exemptions to the requirements**

**Soft fruits & mushrooms**

When sold in a container (in small containers such as punnets, for example) that complies with the requirements of table B above, soft fruits and mushrooms may be sold either by net weight or by gross weight, as long as the weight is made known to the customer prior to purchase. This can be done by means of a notice stating the weight of each container of produce.

**Countable produce**

Countable produce, as listed below, may be sold by number instead of complying with the general requirements given above:

- Apples
- Apricots
- Artichokes (globe)
- Aubergines
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Coconuts
- Corn on the cob
- Cucumber
- Fennel
- Figs (fresh)
- Garlic
- Lettuce
- Limes
- Mangoes
- Marrows
- Melons
- Nectarines
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Pomegranates
- Pomelo
- Pumpkins
Beetroots (included cooked) | Grapefruit | Onions (other than spring) | Radishes
---|---|---|---
Grapefruit | Guavas | Oranges | Shaddock
Capsicum | Kiwi fruit | Passion fruit | Soft citrus fruits
Cabbage | Kohlrabi | Pawpaw | Tomatoes
Celery | Lemons | Peaches | Ugli

If not marked with the net weight, prepacks of countable produce must be marked with the number of items in the container, except for prepacks containing up to eight items where all of the items can clearly be seen and counted.

**Large potatoes**

Prepacks containing large potatoes, each weighing over 175 g, may be sold by number providing that the container is labelled with the number of potatoes it contains and a statement that they are all heavier than a particular stated weight.

**Bunched products**

The following items may be sold by the bunch instead of complying with the general requirements given above:

Asparagus | Endives | Radishes | Mint
---|---|---|---
Beetroots | Mustard and cress | Salad cress | Watercress
Carrots | Onions (including spring) | Garlic
Chives | Parsley | Turnips

**Seasonal bag-and-box schemes etc**

The above requirements for selling by weight do not apply where selections of three or more items of fresh fruits or vegetables are put in a container ready for sale or for delivery to customers. Nor do they apply where fresh fruit and vegetable items are packed together with potatoes or other items such as cheese, meat, bread, etc.
Small & large quantities

Fresh fruit and vegetables sold in quantities of less than 5 g or more than 5 kg are exempt from the above requirements to sell by weight or number and to make the quantity known to the customer. This exemption does not apply to potatoes.

Price marking requirements

In general all foods must have their price displayed and include VAT where applicable.

The price must be displayed on or near the product, be unambiguous and easily read by customers without them having to ask for assistance.

For most non-prepacked items or for products where the customer requests a particular quantity, the unit price per kilogram must be indicated on or near the goods, or on a price list. You may also display a price per pound but this must not be more prominent than the metric kilogram price. For more expensive products you may also assist customers with an additional price per 100 g where this might give a more meaningful indication of the price the customer will have to pay.

For greengrocer counters in shops with a sales area of more than 280 m² the unit price of prepacked products must also be displayed on or near the goods - for example, on a shelf edge ticket or a price list.

However, there are exceptions. The main ones are as follows:

- products near their expiry date and sold at a reduced price
- an assortment of different items sold as a single pack
- products that are not required to be sold by weight - for example, countable produce or produce allowed to be sold by the bunch
- any product where the unit price is identical to the selling price

The unit price must be in metric, generally the price per kilogram. The unit price per pound may also be given in addition to the metric marking but must be given less prominence.

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 Act 1963 (Cheese, Fish, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Meat and Poultry) Order 1984
Weights and Measures (Miscellaneous Foods) Order 1988
Price Marking Order 2004

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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 UK legislation can be found on each link’s ‘More Resources’ tab; amendments to EU legislation are usually incorporated into the text.

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