



# Small Capacity Scales

## BUREAU OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

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## RESOURCES

More information on applicable Wisconsin laws can be found at these links:

**Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 92**  
[docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin\\_code/atcp/090/92](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/atcp/090/92)

**Licensed Service Company Listing**  
<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

**Municipality Weights and Measures Programs**  
<http://wiwma.org/weights-measures-directory/>

### Small capacity scales

Small capacity scales are commercial scales (used to buy or sell a commodity) with a capacity of up to 300lb. These and all other commercial scales must be installed and maintained by a service company that is licensed by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) (Wisconsin Administrative Code § ATCP 92.20(1)). Once it is installed and sealed by a service company, the scale can be used commercially.

To find a licensed service company in your area, search the DATCP listing from our website: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

### Scales that cannot be used commercially

Examples of scales that cannot be used commercially in Wisconsin include bathroom scales, baby scales, portion scales, scales marked "Not Legal for Trade," and mechanical scales with thumb screw zero adjustments.

### Basic requirements for purchasing a scale

- Scale must have a National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) certificate of conformance if it was brought into the state after January 1, 1997. This ensures that the device described in the Certificate is capable of meeting applicable requirements of the NIST Handbook 44, Specifications, Tolerances, and Other Technical Requirements for Weighing and Measuring devices.
- Scale must be suitable for its intended use with respect to elements of its design, including but not limited to:
  - Capacity
  - Number of scale divisions
  - Value of the scale divisions or verification scale division
  - Minimum loads to be weighed
  - Computing capability

### Installation requirements

- New scales must be inspected and tested before use.
  - If you purchase a scale from a scale company that is licensed by DATCP, the scale company must test and inspect the scale at the time of installation. The scale may be used commercially at that time. Check [here](#) to see if your municipality has its own weights and measures program.
  - If you purchase a scale from a private party, a catalog, or a non-licensed company, you are responsible for hiring a service company for an inspection and test. You cannot use the scale until it is installed, inspected, and tested by a DATCP licensed service company and the local municipality if required.

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### **Installation requirements (cont.)**

- Fixed location scales must be installed so that the foundation, supports, or any other detail of the installation will not disturb the scale's operation or performance.
- Deli scales placed on shelf units attached to the deli case must be stable so the scale can maintain a level condition. Some pre-pack scales placed on stainless steel tables do not meet this requirement.
- Scales used in direct sales must be positioned so the customer can observe the entire weighing operation, including the weight display/indicator.

### **Periodic inspection of the scale**

- Stores should inspect scales regularly to make sure they are in a zero-balance condition. Scales that do not return to zero cause incorrect measurements.
- Debris must be cleared from the edges of a scanner platter on a regular basis to insure accurate weighing.
- A DATCP Weights and Measures inspector or City Sealer may inspect the scale at any time.
  - If a Weights and Measures Inspector finds a scale incorrect, the reason(s) for rejection will be provided in an inspection report along with a required date for compliance. If the inspector attaches a red tag to the scale, the scale is immediately removed from service and can no longer be used commercially until it is brought into compliance.

### **Point of Sale Systems**

The sales information recorded by cash registers that are interfaced with a scale must contain the following information for items weighed at the checkout stand:

- Net weight
- Unit price
- Total price
- Product class; or, in a system equipped with a price look-up capability, the product name or code number

All of the above items must appear on the cash register receipt.

### **Minimum load**

Because weighing small quantities and/or high value commodities on a scale not intended for such use may result in large errors, a commercial scale must be suitable for the minimum load it is weighing. Examples of high value commodities sold in small quantities you may encounter are bulk spices and teas.

A minimum load is 20 scale divisions for Class III scales (grocery scales), since weighing light loads is likely to result in large errors. The recommended minimum load for a grocery scale with .01 pound scale divisions is 0.2 pounds. For a scale with .005 pound divisions the recommended minimum load is 0.1 pounds.

### **Tare**

On any scale, the tare division must be equal to the scale division. For example, if the scale has .01 lb divisions, the tare divisions must also be .01 lb. The tare mechanism must operate only in a backward direction (that is, in a direction of under-registration) with no load on the scale. A device designed to automatically clear any tare value must also be designed to prevent the automatic clearing of tare until a transaction has been completed.

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