

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, TRADING STANDARDS DEPARTMENT**  
**WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT 1985**

**GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE PROPRIETORS AND ATTENDANTS OF PUBLIC WEIGHBRIDGES**

In order to use a weighbridge for public weighings both the equipment and attendants must be approved.

For the equipment, this is achieved by having it tested and stamped as accurate by an Inspector of Weights and Measures. This is to ensure that the equipment is suitable for public use as well as being sufficiently accurate.

For the attendant, they must obtain a certificate of competency issued by the Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures to ensure that they know how to operate it correctly. Certification requires a fairly simple examination covering the use of the equipment, issuing tickets, keeping records and answering questions which demonstrate the attendant understands his legal responsibilities. A prospective attendant should have little difficulty in passing the test provided they have practised use of the equipment and studied the following guidance notes.

In order to obtain a certificate you or your employer should contact Trading Standards at the address shown at the back of these notes.

Arrangements will be made for you to be tested using your firm's weighbridge. On passing, the certificate will entitle you to use the equipment specified on it anywhere in the Country. If your employer changes the type of equipment you will need to be retested.

As most equipment is now digital these notes are directed towards that type of equipment. However, the same principles will apply to other types of equipment and if you are in doubt you should contact us.

**WHAT YOU HAVE TO KNOW TO GET A CERTIFICATE**

**1. Understand and demonstrate the operation of the weighbridge including:**

a) the purpose of the "all eights" display.	the display test button checks all the segments of each digital number by showing "all eights". Any blown segments are apparent.
b) the need to balance the machine and method of achievement. ( on certain mechanical machines this will include adjustment)	the balance button re - sets the machine to zero. An initial zero reading is required to give accurate results. (balance can be adjusted using the "balance weight")
c) the correct use of any Taring device.	compensates for packaging to give a net weight e.g. empty container is "tared" so that scale reads zero. Net load then reads on the indicator. <b>NOT</b> to be used for balancing
d) the use of the ticket printer including the purpose of "stop-fraud" devices and the resetting of date and time displays.	"stop-fraud" devices prevent ticket printing in certain circumstances to prevent mis-use or fraudulent use of the machine. It is important that the date and time are correct on the printed ticket

**On mechanical machines the following must be also be understood.**

e) the use of locking or relieving gear.	this locks the weighbridge plate to prevent unnecessary wear / damage to the knife edges under the plate.
f) the use of unit weights.	these increase the weighing range of the machine by adding "charts" to the dial.

**2. Be able to keep proper records including:**

a) understanding the terms "gross", "Tare" and "Net".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ "Gross" weight is the total weight of vehicle and load.</li> <li>✱ "Tare" weight is the weight of the empty vehicle.</li> <li>✱ "Net" weight is the weight of the load.</li> </ul>
b) correctly entering weights on the tickets and conducting simple arithmetical calculations.	arithmetical ability is important and the relationship between Gross, Tare and Net should be well understood. For example $Gross - Tare = Net$ .
c) the need to complete all records correctly (especially tickets given to clients). Must be clear and indelible.	complete clearly in ink to prevent alterations. Pencil <b>MUST NOT</b> be used on tickets.
d) understanding that only tare weights found by weighing should be entered on the ticket. If no tare weight is determined the ticket should be so marked.	under <b>NO</b> circumstances should tares stated by clients be entered on the tickets. If the tare is not determined enter "Tare not determined" on the ticket in the appropriate place.
e) Knowing what information <b>MUST</b> be included on the clients ticket.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ the weights ascertained</li> <li>✱ the date and time</li> <li>✱ particulars of any vehicle (e.g. reg no.)</li> <li>✱ descriptions of any load (e.g. Scrap Iron) (see also para 7a below).</li> </ul>

**3. Know the precautions which should be taken at the time of weighing including:**

a) the load is entirely on the plate.	necessary for an accurate result.
b) no person is in or on the vehicle or on the plate during weighing.	all persons should be out of the vehicle. By remaining in the vehicle a false weight may be obtained.

**4. Understand the meaning of Double Weighing:**

Under **NO** circumstances must a double weighing be carried out. It is forbidden by law.

commonly used for large vehicles on small weighbridges e.g. the front axle is weighed, the rear axle is weighed and the result added together to give a total weight. Inherently inaccurate on most weighbridges and must not be carried out.

**5. Know the common faults likely to lead to faulty weighings including:**

a) dirt or water on plate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✱ sweep and clean plate regularly.</li><li>✱ re-balance regularly.</li></ul>
b) space between plate and surround blocked.	dirt and stones often jam the plate causing inaccurate weighings. Check and clear regularly.
c) flooded pit.	ensure drainage is satisfactory. Pump out as required.
d) part of load off the plate.	ensure load is as centrally placed as possible.
e) excessive wear caused by unnecessary driving over the plate and fierce braking of vehicles stopping to be weighed.	only the vehicle to be weighed should pass over plate. Stop vehicles to be weighed before driving onto plate. Advise drivers to drive with care. (Use relieving gear on mechanical equipment).

**6. Section 20 of the Weights and Measures Act 1985 places certain duties on weighbridge attendants the breach of which constitutes an offence for which you may be prosecuted.**

**You MUST be fully conversant with these duties. They are:**

a) you must carry out a weighing on demand.	you may only refuse if you have reasonable grounds for doing so e.g. the weighbridge is closed, won't work correctly etc.
b) you must weigh fairly	
c) you must give the client a written statement of weight	a proper weighbridge ticket is the most suitable
d) you must keep records of the weighing and you should not wilfully destroy or deface them for a period of at least 2 years.	the record must contain at least the information specified at 2. e) above. Records must be produced to an Inspector of Weights and Measures upon request.

e) you must not issue a false statement of weight or make a false record.	
f) you must not commit any fraud in connection with any weighing or purported weighing.	other persons can also commit offences in connection with weighing and records. In certain circumstances you could find yourself liable for aiding and abetting those other persons.

**7. Section 20 also allows you to seek certain information from the client in particular:**

you may require the client to give his name and address for record purposes.	if the client refuses or gives false information they commit an offence. A refusal to give this information would be reasonable grounds for refusing to weigh.
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**If you are not sure about any of the matters mentioned above in these notes please contact:-**

**TRADING STANDARDS DEPARTMENT, MUNDELLS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 1FT  
Tel: 01707 292429, who will make arrangements for a Trading Standards Officer to give advice.**

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**NOTE FOR PROPRIETORS OF PUBLIC WEIGHBRIDGES**

It is your responsibility to ensure that your attendants hold a certificate issued by the Chief Inspector. Similarly you must ensure your weighbridge documentation e.g. the tickets, is in a suitable form to allow the attendant to give written statements as required by the above note. You are also responsible for retaining weighing records for two years and for their production to Inspectors of Weights and Measures.

Failure to do so together with wilful destruction or defacement within that period are offences which can be committed by you.

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The offences referred to in these notes carry penalties of up to £1,000. Offences of fraud carry penalties of up to £5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment.

January 2006