

Guidance notes for the proprietors and attendants of public weighbridges

What you need to do to be a Public Weighbridge Operator

Operators of public weighbridges have responsibilities to make sure that they can carry out their duties competently and honestly.

Under the Weights and Measures Act no one may operate a public weighbridge unless they hold a certificate from a Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures.

If you apply for a certificate a Trading Standards Officer will test what you know by asking you questions and watching you use the weighbridge. **You will need to show that you:**

- can operate the weighbridge satisfactorily
- can complete any weighbridge tickets and related documents satisfactorily
- understand basic terms used in operating a weighbridge
- understand the duties of a weighbridge operator
- understand 'scams' which you may, unknowingly, be involved in as a weighbridge operator
- understand how the accuracy of the weighbridge may be affected
- can perform simple maths

We will only issue a certificate to cover you for the weighbridge(s) you will be expected to use. If that weighbridge is replaced or changed you may need to take the test again.

If you move to an area that operates a mechanical weighbridge, you will need to take the test again.

The Law

Weights and Measures Act 1985 (Section 20)

Operators of public weighbridges:

- must carry out a weighing when asked unless they have reasonable cause not to
- must carry out the weighing fairly
- must give the person requiring the weighing a written statement of the weight found
- must make a record of:
 - the time
 - the date
 - details to identify the vehicle
 - the identify the load on the vehicle
- must not make a false record or give a false statement
- must not commit any fraud

Records:

- records of weighings must be kept for two years
- records must not be destroyed or defaced within two years

A person bringing an item for weighing:

- must, if asked, give the operator their name and address

Weighing Equipment (Non-Automatic Weighing Machines) Regulations 2000 and Non-Automatic Weighing Instruments Regulations 2016

Under the above regulations it is an offence to carry out a 'double weighing' for trade purposes.

Words and Names used in Weighbridge Operations

Word or Name	What it means
Balance	When the weighbridge has nothing on it, the indication shows zero.
Gross Weight	The total weight of a vehicle, its load and everything on the weighbridge.
GVW	Gross Vehicle Weight
Tare Weight	This is the weight of the vehicle, without its load. It is the weight you will use to calculate the vehicle's load.
Net Weight	When you take the tare weight of the vehicle from its Gross weight, the weight left is the weight of the load.
Train Weight	Like a gross weight, but it means the total weight of an articulated vehicle (tractor and trailer)
GTW	Gross Train Weight
Headwork	The part of the weighbridge equipment which includes the weight display.
Bottom Work	The levers and/or electronic load cells under the plate.
Plate/Platform	The part of the weighbridge on which the vehicle or load is placed to be weighed
Double-weighing	The weighing of a load or vehicle in two or more stages. For example, if an articulated vehicle cannot fit onto a weighbridge plate, the vehicle's weight is calculated by placing the front axles on the weighbridge and noting the weight and then doing the same for the rear axles. The front and rear axle weights are added together to find the total weight of the vehicle. It is illegal to carry out a double weighing where that weighing will be used for a trade transaction.
Axle weighings	The weighing of each axle or groups of axles to find the load placed upon them.
Draw Bar Unit	A rigid vehicle towing by means of a bar a self supporting trailer.
Permitted GVW Permitted GTW	The legal maximum weight allowed on the road.

Weighbridge Problems

1. Regular checks should be made to ensure that there is space between the plate and its surrounding frame.
2. Regular checks should be made to ensure that the weighbridge is properly balanced when unloaded and the indicator shows zero. The Weighbridge Operator must know how to balance the weighing machine.

The Weighbridge Operator must know the purposes of the "all eights display".

3. The balance of a weighbridge will be affected by the build up of dirt etc. on or around the plate. This should be regularly cleaned to avoid too much dirt building-up.

Under the plate, levers or load cells may be affected by the build-up of dirt and should be cleared as necessary. If this does happen to your weighbridge you should look at regular maintenance.

In weighbridges built into pits – where the plate is a level with the ground and the bottom work cannot be seen - balance and accuracy may be affected by a high water level in the pit – this makes the levers or the bottom work 'float'. If this happens pumping equipment should be available and you will be expected to know how to use it.

Weighing Vehicles and Loads

1. We recommend that you weigh all vehicles without passengers or drivers in them so that a false weight is not obtained.

Weighbridge Operators should take special care if passengers are on or in the area of the plate. Nobody should be stood on the plate when you weigh the vehicle.

If a passenger or driver refuse to exit the vehicle, Weighbridge Operators should make a note of this on the ticket.

2. The Weighbridge Operator should check the load for themselves. If this is not possible you should record on the ticket what the driver says the load is and make it clear that this is what the driver has stated.

Weighbridge Operators should be aware that some people bringing loads to be weighed may hide heavy items, which are not part of the load the driver states the vehicle is carrying. These heavy items can then be taken off the vehicle and the load delivered to a customer, therefore the load will be lighter than the weight shown on the weight ticket issued.

3. The Operator should always check any vehicle registration number for themselves and not rely on the driver.
4. The Weighbridge Operator should have a clear view of the plate and make sure that the vehicle being weighed is fully on the plate. Weighbridge Operators should watch out for drivers leaving a wheel over the edge of the plate, this is done to make the vehicle lighter when it is weighed. This may be done to make the tare weight lighter (which makes the load on the vehicle look heavier) or to make the vehicle look lighter than the legal road weights set for overloading offences.
5. It is **illegal** to carry out a double weighing where that weighing will be used for a **trade transaction**.

Weighbridge Tickets

A Weighbridge Operator must give a statement in writing of the weight found to the person demanding the weighing or to their agent (this may be an arrangement made formally or informally but the statement should always go with the vehicle).

They must enter the weight found in the GROSS or TARE box on the weighbridge ticket as appropriate. If tickets are issued without all entries on the ticket being completed, then the Weighbridge Operator must enter NOT WEIGHED or draw lines through the spaces provided for other entries.

Operators **must not** enter a weight **given by the driver** in the tare box, only weights you have determined should be used.

If the driver wants to return after loading for a second weighing of the same vehicle and wants the weighing to be recorded on the same ticket, you should keep the ticket until the second weighing is complete. A Weighbridge Operator should **never** give out a ticket that has any blank spaces.

Weighbridge Operators must complete the other details required on the ticket.

If your weighbridge has an electronic headwork its ticket printer prints some or all of the information onto the ticket. If the printer fails you must still keep a full record along with any calculations worked out accurately.

Records

The Weighbridge Operator must make sure that a record of each weighing is made. These records must be kept for at least 2 years. If the duplicate of the weighbridge ticket is the only record of the weighing, it must also state:

- the time of weighing
- the registration number of the vehicle (if applicable)
- the weight found
- the date

- the nature of the load

If a weighbridge operator thinks that a request

- for a public weighbridge weighing, or
- for the use of public weighbridge weighings,

is odd or unusual they should inform their local Trading Standards office.

Penalties

The maximum penalty for:

- Fraud in connection with a public weighing is an unlimited fine or 6 months imprisonment, or both
- The maximum penalty for recording a false weight is an unlimited fine

Road Traffic Act (Vehicle Overloading)

The law does not require Public Weighbridge Operators to know about rules relating to vehicle overloading, but we would think an operator should have a basic knowledge of vehicle weights.

If operators have weighed a vehicle and think that the weights are above the legal limit for the vehicle on the highway they should point this out to the driver and show them the weight on the weight record. They may also endorse the ticket **“Vehicle Overloaded – Driver Aware”**.

The law does **not** give a weighbridge operator the power to:

- keep back the weighbridge ticket or
- stop the vehicle leaving

Note for proprietors of public weighbridges

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

It is an offence for the proprietor of a public weighbridge to:

- fail to retain weighing records for a period of two years
- fail to produce weighing records detailed above upon the request of an Inspector of Weights and Measures
- destroy or deface weighing records as detailed above

If you need further guidance, please contact us at:

Trading Standards Department – Community Protection

Hertfordshire County Council

Farnham House,

Six Hills Way,

Stevenage,

SG1 2ST

01707 292429

tradingstandards@hertfordshire.gov.uk