

Wisconsin's 2019 Weights and Measures Numbers Add up to Accuracy

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[Editor's Note: National Weights and Measures Week is March 1-7.]

MADISON – Consumers purchasing at Wisconsin businesses expect to get what they pay for. During Weights and Measures Week and throughout the year, inspectors at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) test product scales, registers, gas pumps, and fuel quality at stores throughout the state to ensure consumer's confidence remains high.

"A fair marketplace requires effort from businesses in maintaining their scales, registers, and pumps and ensuring they are accurate," said Lara Sutherlin, administrator for the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. "In 2019 Wisconsin businesses showed that they respect their customers and take their responsibilities seriously."

DATCP's weights and measures team conducted 306,759 inspections at 6,849 business locations statewide in 2019. In line with results from recent years:

- Wisconsin gas pumps continued to provide the correct amount of fuel, or even over-deliver, in nearly 100% of our tests in 2019.
- Prices at the register were also accurate or in the customer's favor in 98% of our tests.
- Tests on scales used to weigh products specifically sold by weight (such as meat, deli, and produce items at grocery stores) were accurate or measured in the customer's favor almost 100% of the time.
- Packaged products sold by weight (such as ground beef) were labeled accurately in almost 99% of tests.

Inspectors also tested 4,840 fuel samples for quality last year, and nearly 99% of the samples met required national standards.

When inspectors find inaccurate measurements in the field, violations are reported to store management and orders are issued to correct the problem. In 2019, DATCP inspectors:

- Conducted 1,165 weights and measures re-inspections to ensure that accuracy corrections were made.
- Rejected and required corrections on 1,992 scales and meters for inaccuracies.
- Rejected 2,490 packages sold by weight for being short measure.
- Ordered 1,057 prices corrected for ringing up inaccurately at the register.

Where inspectors find repeat violations, higher-level enforcement is possible. In 2019, civil forfeiture settlements totaling \$225,998.54 were collected from companies as a result of weights and measures inspections including fuel quality violations, product quantity misrepresentations, and weights and measures service company violations.

"National Weights and Measures Week is a great opportunity to spotlight the hard work of DATCP's inspectors and lab teams and their importance in maintaining a fair marketplace," said Sutherlin. "We are all consumers and we all rely on their expertise and efforts to give each dollar its maximum buying power."

For additional information or to file a weights and measures complaint, visit datcp.wi.gov, send an e-mail to datcpweightsandmeasures@wi.gov or call 608-224-4942.

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