

THE PRICE AND QUANTITY VERIFICATION PROGRAM

The primary function of weights and measures is to ensure that equity prevails in all commercial transactions involving quantity representations. The assurance of full weight and measure, and the elimination of fraud and misrepresentation have been objectives from the beginning of quantity determinations.

The Price and Quantity Verification Program fulfills this objective by monitoring commerce at all levels: retail, wholesale, and manufacturing, in order to minimize measurement errors in representations for both packaged and over-the-counter sales, and to ensure the accuracy of commodity pricing.

Californians spend about 800 billion dollars in commodities subject to Price and Quantity Verification inspection each year. Thousands of purchases are made each year by the program to monitor sales price accuracy. The purchased items are then tested in county and state laboratories for quantity and compliance with labeling requirements.

BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRAM

To serve the people of California by fair and equitable enforcement of all laws relating to Price and Quantity Verification. The functions are achieved by:

- A. Evaluation of marketplace conditions.
 - 1. Package inspections to verify the accuracy of the net content statements of:
 - (a) commodities packaged and sold on the same premises;
 - (b) wholesale and retail packages at the point of packaging, shipping, destination, or sale.
 - 2. Verification of accuracy in pricing commodities assuring that the purchaser is correctly charged the stated or advertised price of an item.
 - 3. Verification of accurate net quantity and price for bulk or non-packaged commodities sold via a scale, meter, or any other weighing, measuring, or counting device.
 - 4. Ensuring consumer check-stands permit customer monitoring of stored price information when it is recalled from an automated system.
- B. Enforcement of the California Business and Professions Code relating to accuracy of quantity and price whether represented and priced by weight, measure or count.
- C. Enforcement of the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act to provide potential customers with information needed to compare values and to prevent unfair and deceptive packaging practices.

BENEFITS

All segments of California society benefit from the program.

- A strong economic base is formed from which commerce may grow.
- Citizens have confidence in label representations and the ability to compare values.
- Customers and businesses are assured through monitoring that overcharges for goods and misleading advertising of quantity or price are kept to a minimum.
- Business and industry have a foundation for fair competition in the marketplace.

HISTORY

The basis for the Price and Quantity Verification Program was provided for in 1850. The first session of the California Legislature passed an act to establish standard weights and measures in conformity with the standards established by Congress.

Through the years following this act, packaged commodities were inspected on a very limited basis. There were no sampling plans, and all packages in a lot had to be individually weighed or measured. For the most part, this was time consuming and not cost effective. In an effort to increase effectiveness, several amendments were enacted which enhanced or repealed parts of the original weights and measures law.

In December 1960, California adopted Sampling Procedures into the California Code of Regulations. The average net content of a large lot of packages could now be determined by checking a few samples from the entire lot leading to cost-effective inspections of large numbers of wholesale and retail packages.

California Sampling procedures were replaced in 1996 with the adoption of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 133 and referenced in Business and Professions Code 12211.