



Animal Scales at County Fairs

BUREAU OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
(608) 224-4942
datcp.wi.gov

RESOURCES

Wis. Statute 98

<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/98>

Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 92

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/atcp/090/92

Licensed Service Company Listing

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

County fairs that use animal scales to determine animal size or sales weight, including rabbits and poultry, must use legal for trade commercial scales. In order to obtain accurate weights and be compliant with the law, scales must meet the following requirements.

Selecting and Using the Right Scale

Before using a scale, ensure all of the following:

- The scale is legal for trade.
 - Is your scale a 1997 or newer scale?
 - Scales and indicators brought into the state after January 1, 1997, must have a National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) Certificate of Conformance. This ensures that the scale meets the requirements of NIST Handbook 44 and has been thoroughly examined and tested to maintain its accuracy. The NTEP approval number may be found on the scale and/or indicator's identification plate (example : Approval or CC# XX-XXX or a marking of III or III/IIIL inside of an oval). The NTEP certificate is a document that ensures that the scale met all commercial scale design requirements at the time it was manufactured and is separate from the annual calibration performed by a weights and measures service company. You can check for NTEP Certificates of Conformance here: <http://www.ncwm.net/certificates>
 - Is your scale a 1996 or older scale?
 - Scales and indicators brought into the state on or before January 1, 1997, must have been designed by the manufacturer for commercial use to be legal for trade and must meet all applicable requirements of NIST Handbook 44. There is no age limit for commercial scales as long as they meet the requirements.
- The scale is level, properly maintained, and is accurate.
- The scale is suitable for its intended use, including the size of the animal to be weighed, stock cages, scale capacity, and minimum graduation/division size.

Contact a licensed Wisconsin Weights and Measures service company to help select a suitable scale. County fair animal scales that are not designed to be portable must be installed and serviced by a Wisconsin licensed service company. Scales, whether fixed or portable, should also be tested for accuracy by a service company immediately prior to use.

A list of licensed service companies is available on the DATCP website:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

Maintaining the Scale

Proper maintenance of scales while they are in use at the fair is required. Plan to have a designated person who is responsible for maintaining the scale in proper operating condition. Discontinue use and contact your service company if you observe abnormal operation of the scale.

- Make sure the scale is at zero before each weighing. Scales that do not return to zero cause incorrect weights.
- Clear out the debris from animals that collects on the scale platform and underneath the scale. Debris can obstruct the weighing elements of the scale and cause inaccurate weighing.
- Look at the scale and make sure it is not binding or rubbing on anything, including the scale frame.
- Ensure the scale remains level.

Moving the Scale

Animal scales are sensitive instruments and care needs to be taken when transporting them. Scales that are not designed to be portable can only be moved by a licensed service company and must be tested when re-installed. Scales that are designed to be portable can be moved by the owner, following these instructions:

- Be familiar with and follow appropriate manufacturer's instructions for moving a portable scale—dragging and bouncing a scale can easily result in damage or incorrect weighing.
- Carefully place the scale on a smooth, hard, stable surface.
- Place the scale so that nothing is binding or rubbing the scale platform.
- Ensure the scale is level before use. A scale that is not level can easily weigh incorrectly.
 - If the scale includes a built-in level, use it to level the scale.
 - If the scale does not have a built-in level, use a hand-held level to check and adjust the scale.
- Ensure that the scale starts and returns to zero after each weighing.
- After moving a portable scale, accuracy testing is highly recommended, but not required

Clarifying Terms

- **Calibration:** Performance and accuracy testing of the scale.
- **Certified:** A term commonly used in industry, but having little relevance in law. Any scale could potentially be “certified”, but that does not make the scale legal for trade. Only scales that have been manufactured specifically for commercial use and have met all accuracy and maintenance requirements of NIST Handbook 44 are legal for use in trade applications.
- **NTEP Certificate of Conformance:** A document that ensures that a specific model of a measuring device (scale and/or indicator) met all NIST Handbook 44 design and performance requirements at the time it was manufactured. This certificate does not need to be in the owner's possession.
- **Commercial:** Used or employed in establishing the size, quantity, extent, area, composition (limited to meat and poultry), constituent values (limited to grain), or measurement of quantities, things, produce, or articles for distribution or consumption, purchased, offered, or submitted for sale, hire, or award, or in computing any basic charge or payment for services rendered on the basis of weight or measure.

If you have any questions about animal scales or Wisconsin weights and measures law, please call 608-224-4942, or email DATCPWeightsAndMeasures@wisconsin.gov