



Department of Planning & Development
Inspection Unit

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THE BASICS OF TARE

What is tare?

Tare is all of the material used in the packaging and preservation of a product that is not part of the actual commodity for sale. It may include boxes, trays, soakers, bags, labels, glue, ties, wrappers, prizes, gifts, coupons, garnishes, sauces (not listed on product identity), glazing, ice, wax and any other material that is not part of the actual product. In order for edible sauces or glazes to have their net weight included as part of the product net weight, the item must be listed on all of the product labels i.e. Ham with Brown Sugar Glaze. **For commodities sold by weight, the declared package weight must be exclusive of the weight of the tare materials.**

How is the weight of tare determined?

Tare weight is determined by weighing clean, **dry** (Wisconsin is a dry tare state), unused or use tare materials. To set tare it is recommended that you average the tare weights from at least 10 packages of the same item. **For products that are sold from bulk and include individual wrappers the weight of the individual wrappers must also be included in the tare.**

How is tare taken?

Tare can either be programmed into the scale or POS system that is used to weight the product or store personnel can enter it manually.

Who is responsible for determining and taking tare?

The entity that is responsible for the weight declaration on the commodity is responsible for deducting correct tare. Determining and taking an appropriate tare on products that are weighted prior to reaching the retail level is generally the responsibility of the party who packaged them. Determining and taking an appropriate tare on products that are weighted at the retail level is the responsibility of the store. Note however, that a retail establishment can ultimately be held accountable for an incorrect net weight on any product they sell.

What are the responsibilities of store management with regard to tare?

Store management is responsible for ensuring that all tares are accurate whether they are taken automatically or manually. This may include verifying tares for items packaged off the premises. When the packaging of a product changes the tare must also be changed accordingly. Manual tare weights should be conspicuously posted for store personnel to reference. **Be aware that only on tare can be taken at a time (either automatically or manually) so store personnel must weigh each package individually.** If they don't the tare for the additional packages will not be accounted for.

What if tare varies from package to package for the same commodity?

This is a common problem in the sale of random weight products; particularly bulk commodities that are individually wrapped. The more the consumer buys the more tare has to be accounted for. One option is to use a variable tare or percentage scale that can be programmed to adjust the tare as the weight fluctuates. An alternative is to program or provide a list of the maximum tares that will be used for any single package or purchase.

Questions? Additional questions or concerns about the material addressed in this brochure can be referred to your municipal weights and measures inspection unit whose numbers are listed on the front cover of this brochure.

**City of Madison
Weights and Measures Program**

**(608) 246-4514 or
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