



The Basics of Tare

BUREAU OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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RESOURCES

NIST Handbook 133
<http://www.nist.gov/pml/wmd/pubs/upload/h133-2015-web-final.pdf>

Wis. Stat. Chapter 98
<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/98/>
Title

Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 90
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/atcp/090/90.pdf

What is tare?

Tare is all 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, ice glazing, wax and any other material that is not part of the actual product. For commodities sold by weight, the declared package weight must be exclusive of the weight of tare materials.

How is the weight of tare determined?

Tare weight is determined by weighing clean, dry, unused or used tare materials. To set a 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 cash register system used to weigh the product, or it can be entered manually by store personnel.

Who is responsible for determining and taking tare?

Primarily, whomever is responsible for the weight declaration on the commodity is responsible for tare. Determining and taking an appropriate tare on products that are weighed 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 weighed 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 one tare can be taken at a time, (either automatically or manually), so store personnel must weigh each package individually. If they do not, tare for the additional packages will not be accounted for.

What if tare varies from package to package of 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 scale that can be programmed to adjust the tare as the weight fluctuates. An alternative is to program or list the tare as the maximum that will need to be taken for any single package or purchase.

Tare Weight

One of the key items to accurate package weights is correct calculation of tare weight. Customers cannot be charged for tare when weighing packages for sale. The weight of the tare materials must be subtracted from the gross weight of the packaged product in order to determine the correct net weight and the correct price.

- ❖ **Store Packed Commodities:** Retailers are responsible for determining accurate tare weights, and for deducting tare from the declared weight. For items packaged on site, tare weight can be determined by separately weighing the dry packaging material.
- ❖ **Pre-Packed Commodities:** When stores are weighing and labeling pre-packaged random weight items the store is still responsible for ensuring accurate tare weights. Tare weights for these items should be obtained from the manufacturer.
- ❖ **Bulk Commodities:** Tare weight for bulk items must be deducted from the gross weight at the point of sale. These are products that the consumer selects and places in a package, usually a bag, to be weighed at the checkout register.

Types of Tare

Unused Dry Tare includes all unused packaging materials (including pads, labels, ties, etc.) that contain or enclose a product. It includes prizes, gifts, coupons, or decorations that are not part of the product. Inspectors will determine tare weights from unused packaging materials located on site.

Used Dry Tare includes used tare material that has been air dried, or dried in some manner to simulate unused tare weight. It includes all packaging materials that can be separated from the packaged product, either readily (e.g., by shaking) or by washing, scraping, ambient air drying, or other techniques, but not including laboratory procedures like oven drying. If an inspector is unable to determine proper tare values for pre-packaged products, it will be necessary to open packages.

Tips for Maintaining Accurate Tare Weights

- ❖ Periodically check the tare values stored in the scale. Inform the person responsible for tare of any errors.
- ❖ Correct mislabeled tare values.
- ❖ Verify dry tare values by weighing the tare products. Make sure your packaging matches the programmed tare.
- ❖ Conduct your own audit inspection of the packages in your display.
- ❖ Update the tare values when packaging materials change.
- ❖ Maintain a current list of pre-packaged tare values from outside distributors.
- ❖ Train packers and clerks to accurately determine tare weights.



COST OF ERRORS

Even small errors can add up to surprisingly big losses for grocery stores or their customers. The following example shows how a seemingly minimal tare weight mistake or inaccurate scale calibration can affect your bottom line when multiplied by thousands of packages sold over the course of a year.

Ground Beef: average per pound price of \$3.79

Package Size	Packages Sold Per Year	Cost of Error of .01lb.	Cost of Error of .02lb.	Cost of Error of .03 lb.
1 lb.	75,000	\$2,842.50	\$5,685.00	\$8,527.50
2 lb.	35,000	\$2,653.00	\$5,306.00	\$7,959.00
5 lb	25,000	\$4,737.50	\$9,475.00	\$14,212.50
Annual Loss:		\$10,233.00	\$20,466.00	\$30,699.00