

Become a smarter shopper

There are things you, as a consumer, can do to make sure you're not paying too much or receiving less than you pay for.

Be **AWARE** of basic issues.

Common marketplace mistakes cost you money.

This brochure has valuable tips that will help you be a smart shopper.

Pay attention to these tips and follow the Three Easy Steps to Smart Shopping. Be sure you get what you pay for.



Shopping Tips

Be sure the scale starts at zero.

Look for a state seal on the scale.

Watch prices as they appear on the register to ensure they match shelf tags.

Review your receipt while still in the store.

What if a retailer won't fix the problem, or I feel I've been overcharged?

Who should I contact?



Measurement Standards Division Oregon Department of Agriculture

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Fill out a complaint form online at:
<http://msd.oda.state.or.us>

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.



The Measurement Standards Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture investigates every complaint received.

We provide information to consumers on packaging laws and wise buying tips.

Watch the scale • Be aware • Review your receipt

At the store...

Are you getting what you're paying for?



For More Information:
503-986-4670

Measurement Standards
Division of the
Oregon Department
of Agriculture

How to become a smarter shopper

What is Tare?

Tare is the weight of packaging material. It's the weight of the plastic container used to package your deli items, the plastic tray holding your cut of meat or filet of fish, or the paper bag your bulk coffee beans are sold in.

When you purchase items by weight, the tare should be subtracted from the total weight.

You should only pay for the weight of the product, not the container.

Can the weight of the package really make a difference?

Typically, a 0.04 pound coffee bag will cost you 36 cents.

It may not seem like a lot, but it's 36 cents more than you should have paid and this error adds up quickly.

Think of all the coffee that people buy every day!

But don't the stores and packers have to pay for the container?

Yes, they do. The cost of the container is part of the overhead costs they must consider when setting the price per pound of an item.

If a retailer does not subtract tare for an item, you are paying the same price per pound for the packaging as you're paying for the item, whether purchasing potato salad at \$0.89 per pound or scallops at \$10.99 per pound. The store does not pay that much for the packaging.

If the tare weight is not subtracted from an item when calculating the selling price, not only are you paying more than you should for the packaging, but each customer is paying a different amount for the same container. Does that seem fair to you?

Being a smart shopper can save you money.

Watch the scale, be aware of appropriate charges, and review your receipts at the store.

How can I tell if a store is taking tare?

Many scales are capable of storing tare weights in their memory. These scales may show tare weight on their indicator, or will automatically set the scale to less than zero by an amount equal to the tare weight.

For scales without such capabilities, the retailer should set the container on the scale and "zero" the scale before adding any product to the container and weighing the product.

At the check out stand the key is to be sure the checker weighs only one bulk item at a time. The computer can look up the tare for one coffee bag and subtract it from the total weight, but it will only subtract the weight of one bag. If two bags are on the scale you will be paying for the weight of one of those bags.

If you don't see any sign that tare is being taken, feel free to ask the retailer "are you taking tare?" If they have forgotten it will give them a chance to remedy their error. If they have taken tare and you did not see it, it will give them a chance to explain to you how it was done.

1 Watch the scale!

- Make sure the scale starts at zero or less
- If a scale reads +0.05 pounds before an item is placed on it, you will be overcharged
- If it appears that tare is not being subtracted, ask a store employee

2 Be aware!

- Pay attention to the prices of items you're buying
- Watch the prices as they appear on the register and make sure they match prices on the shelf
- Make sure the cashier weighs each item separately

3 Review your receipt at the store!

- The store is the best place to check that you weren't overcharged
- Item costs are still fresh in your mind
- Store management is accessible for correcting any errors