

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What type of scale do I require? Answering some of the following questions may help you narrow down the type of scale you are looking for.**

- Does the scale need to be legal for trade?
  - Legal for trade is a designation given to a scale that has been certified by a Measurement Canada Accredited company (such as B.C. Scale Co. Ltd.) or by Measurement Canada themselves. This certification allows you to use your scale to purchase and sell goods and also to determine shipping weights that are cost-based (i.e., packages, pallets, etc.). A couple of examples where a scale requires legal for trade certification include a retail scale at a deli/market or a truck scale at a gravel pit.
- What will you be weighing on the scale?
- Do you want a mechanical scale or an electronic scale?
- What size of platform do you require? Or do you require a hanging scale?
- What capacity do you need? (In other words, what is the weight of the heaviest object that would ever be weighed on the scale?)
- What is the weight of the lightest object that would ever be weighed on the scale?
- What graduation size do you require (i.e., .01grams, 1.0oz, 1lb, etc.)?
  - Another term for graduation size is increment. The graduation size you require will depend on the material that you are weighing and how crucial accuracy is to your application.
- What unit of measurement will you be weighing in (lb, kg, oz, etc.)?
- What type of environment will the scale be used in (indoor/outdoor, wet/dry, corrosive, hazardous, etc.)?
- Do you require a battery-operated scale or will you have access to a plug-in?
- Do you require scale portability? (In other words, will you be moving/transporting the scale often, very little or never?)
- Do you have a budget?

### **Do I need to have my scale's calibration checked?**

**Yes.** Depending on how the scale is being used, the frequency of the calibration checks can vary. If the scale is undergoing heavy use every day, then perhaps a calibration check and scale service should be done as often as once per month. Usually our customers have a calibration check/service done an average of 3 times per year.

A quality program (ISO 9001, HCCP, etc.) can be another factor in determining the frequency of calibration. The frequency may be required as part of the quality program or governing standard you must meet.

Finally, there is the consideration of possible non-accurate weight measurements and how this affects your company's revenue. Typically your scale or scales can be considered a cash register for your company. If there is a problem with a scale, it is usually that it is weighing light.

#### **Example:**

Your scale is tested and found only 2kg light on 1000kg.  
(This may seem insignificant, until you do the math below.)

Your scale has a capacity of 10,000kg and the product you are weighing is valued at \$2.00/kg.  $2\text{kg} \times 10 = 20\text{kg}$  error on every 10,000kg.  $20\text{kg} \times \$2.00/\text{kg} = \$40.00$  lost revenue.

You sell 100,000kg/day = \$400.00/day. If you do this volume for 30 days, your lost revenue is  $30\text{ days} \times \$400.00 = \$12,000.00$ .

Normally, if there is a problem with a scale (i.e., scale binding), the heavier the load on the scale the worse the scale's performance will be.

The error could be 2kg at 1,000kg but at 10,000kg the error could be 100kg ( $100\text{kg} \times \$2.00/\text{kg} = \$200.00$ ;  
 $100,000\text{kg}/\text{day}$  divided by  $10,000\text{kg}$  loads = 10 loads  $\times \$200.00 = \$2,000.00$  lost revenue per day  $\times 30$  days =  
 $\$60,000.00$ .

The importance of having your scale (cash register) weighing accurately is critical to the profit of your business and the confidence your customers have in you.

Preventative maintenance will save you money in the long term and increase your return on investment.

### **Do I need to have my scale inspected?**

In Canada, if the scale is used in a legal for trade application (i.e., money changes hands based on the scale's weight reading) then the scale MUST be inspected before its first use in trade. The inspection must be performed by Measurement Canada or one of Measurement Canada's Authorized Service Providers. B.C. Scale Co. Ltd. is an Authorized Service Provider and is accredited to perform scale inspections on behalf of Measurement Canada.

### **Do I need to have my scale re-inspected?**

First of all, we need to talk terminologies so that we are as clear as can be when we talk about inspections. Many people confuse the terms calibration and inspection. Calibration is verifying that a scale weighs correctly; that is a 20kg weight weighs 20kg on the scale. At B.C. Scale Co. Ltd., we perform calibrations using certified test weights. All adjustments meet Measurement Canada allowable tolerances, and we provide a scale test report with "as found" and "as left" results on it. This report will meet all requirements for any quality program. An inspection means the measuring device is verified using certified test weights and procedures. When verified, the device has a Measurement Canada sticker and certificate, and the results are sent to Measurement Canada. B.C. Scale Co. Ltd., as a Measurement Canada Authorized Service Provider, can provide all inspection services to you as required below. Measurement Canada defines the first inspection of a brand new scale as an initial inspection. If that scale has another inspection performed on it, then Measurement Canada defines the inspection as a subsequent inspection. If the scale is rejected by Measurement Canada, or fails an inspection performed by an Authorized Service Provider and is repaired, the resulting inspection is defined as a re-inspection.

Currently in Canada there is no mandatory requirement to have a subsequent inspection done. Only an initial inspection is mandatory. However, Measurement Canada is in the process of discussion with all industry sectors (sector reviews) to establish minimum requirements for subsequent inspections.