

Keeping Within The Law

This leaflet contains a general summary of the main requirements of weights and measures and pricing legislation enforced by the Food Control Service as applicable to pubs, restaurants and cafes. There is also legislation that applies to these establishments regarding food labelling – please see our leaflet on food labelling for catering establishments, for further information.

Prices

The price of food and drink must be made clear to customers. The easiest way to do this is to use a price list.

What Should Be On The Price List?

- The price of the food or drink.
- The quantity, if the food or drink is sold by quantity, e.g. “25 ml of gin” or “½ pint of beer”.
- The price for each quantity where different quantities are not priced proportionately, e.g. if the price of a double whisky is not the same as twice the price of a single whisky, you should show the price of both a single and a double.
- You must include VAT in the price when it applies.
- If you add a compulsory service charge, you must display this either as a percentage or as an actual amount on the price list, with as much prominence as the other prices.
- If there is a minimum charge, you should state what it is.

How Many Prices Must Be Displayed?

Wine to be drunk with food

You must give the prices of at least five different wines, unless you offer less than five, in which case you must give the price of each of them.

Food and Drink

- If the price list is not divided up into obvious groups, e.g. beers, mixers, main courses, etc, you must show the prices of at least 30 different items. If you sell less than 30 items, you must give the price of every item.
- If the price list is divided into groups, you must give the price of at least 5 items in each group. If there are less than 5 items in a group, you must give the price of every item.

For either of the above, if you sell soft drinks, you must display the prices of at least 5 of them (or all of them if you sell less than 5 types).

- If you run out of a particular drink or meal, you must remove it from the price list as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where To Display The Price List

This depends on the way the food and drink are served:

Where customers pay for the food or drink before consuming it, for example bar service for drinks and bar meals, you must display the price list where the food and drink are ordered. If this price list cannot be read from outside the area where orders are taken, you should also display a price list at the entrance to the area.

Where an area is set aside just for meals to be eaten, e.g. a café or restaurant, you must display the price list at or near the entrance to the eating area. For example, for restaurants the price list should be displayed in the window or foyer, so that prospective customers can see prices before they enter the restaurant.

Weights And Measures

Beer, Lager and Cider, except when mixed with other drinks, can only be sold draught in these quantities.

1/3 pint, ½ pint, or multiples of ½ pint.

If you use glasses, every glass must be stamped (i.e. have a crown mark and number on it). If you use meters, glasses do not need to be stamped, but the meters must be stamped, the customer must be able to see the glass being filled and you must not fill the glass before it has been ordered.

Gin, Rum, Whisky and Vodka, unless they are sold in cocktails of three or more drinks, may only be sold in these quantities:

25ml, 35ml, or multiples of these quantities.

Old imperial measures (e.g. 1/6 gill) cannot be used for the sale of any spirits.

A notice, which is easy for customers to read, must make it clear which quantity applies, e.g:

The same quantity must apply in all the bars of your pub, restaurant or café.

Whatever you use to measure gin, rum, whisky or vodka (e.g. optics, thimbles) must be stamped and be where customers can see them being used. Bottle top pourers are not usually stamped and they should only be used by pouring them into a thimble before putting the drink into a glass for the customer.

Wine must be sold in the following quantities:

By the bottle,

By the glass in 125ml, 175ml or multiples of these quantities.

By the carafe in 250ml, 500ml, 750ml or 1 litre quantities.

These quantities must be made clear to customers on a notice, or in every wine list or menu, that is easy to read and, again, anything you use to measure out wine (e.g. carafes, glasses or optics) must be stamped.