

1976 No. 155

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Weights and Measures (Marking and Abbreviations) Regulations
(Northern Ireland) 1976

Made 3rd May 1976

Coming into operation 1st August 1976

The Department(a) of Commerce, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sections 8(1)(f) and 15(4)(a) and (d) of the Weights and Measures Act (Northern Ireland) 1967(b) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and of every other power enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following regulations:

PART I

Citation, commencement and revocation

1.—(1) These regulations may be cited as the Weights and Measures (Marking and Abbreviations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1976 and shall come into operation on 1st August 1976.

(2) Nothing in these regulations shall require compliance therewith before 1st January 1978 in any case in which a container which is required to be marked with information as to the quantity of goods made up therein by virtue of Schedule 2, 4, 5, or 6 to the Act, or by virtue of the Weights and Measures (Dentifrices) Order (Northern Ireland) 1974(c), is marked in a manner which accords with the provisions of the Weights and Measures (Marking and Abbreviations of Units of Measurement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970(d).

(3) In the case of returnable bottles, so marked with embossed or fired-on markings, this regulation shall have effect as if 1st January 1980 were substituted for 1st January 1978.

2. The Weights and Measures (Marking and Abbreviations of Units of Measurement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970 are hereby revoked.

PART II

Use for trade of abbreviations of units of measurement

3. This Part of these regulations shall apply as respects the use for trade (other than for the purpose of marking weighing or measuring equipment) of symbols for, and abbreviations of, units of measurement.

4.—(1) Any symbol or abbreviation set out in Schedule 1 may be used for trade to indicate the relevant unit of measurement so set out; and in the case only of abbreviations so set out the letter "s" may be added thereto when it is thought appropriate to indicate the plural.

(a) Formerly Ministry: see 1973 c. 36 s. 40 and Sch. 5 para. 8(1)

(b) 1967 c. 6 (N.I.)

(c) S.R. (N.I.) 1974 No. 282 (II, p. 1342)

(d) S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1970. No. 102 (p. 480)

(2) No symbol or abbreviation other than such a symbol or abbreviation as may be usable by virtue of paragraph (1) shall be used for trade to indicate any unit of measurement set out in the said Schedule.

PART III

Marking of containers

5.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) this Part shall apply as respects the marking of any container required by the provisions of Schedule 2, 4, 5 or 6 to the Act or by any order under section 15(2) of the Act to be marked with any information as to the quantity of the goods made up therein.

(2) The following provision of this Part shall not apply in relation to any catchweight product, that is to say, regulations 8, 9(5), 9(6), 9(7), 10 and 15. In this paragraph “catchweight product” means any food product which because of its nature is not pre-packed according to a pre-determined fixed weight pattern but is pre-packed in varying quantities.

6. Subject to regulations 7 and 8, any unit of measurement set out in Schedule 2 may be used in marking any container which is so required to be marked with information as to quantity by measurement.

Restriction on imperial units to be employed

7.—(1) No marking indicating any quantity in excess of 1 ounce shall be entirely in terms of imperial units of mass or weight smaller than the ounce.

(2) No marking indicating any quantity—

(a) in excess of 48 ounces in the case of any goods to which paragraph 1(c)(ii) of Part VI of Schedule 5 to the Act applies (soap not in tablet, cake, bar or liquid form) and any such goods as are mentioned in paragraph 1(c) of Part IX of that Schedule (non-liquid detergents), or

(b) in excess of 16 ounces in the case of any other goods, shall be entirely in terms of imperial units of mass or weight smaller than the pound.

(3) No marking indicating any quantity in excess of 40 fluid ounces shall be entirely in terms of imperial units of capacity measurement smaller than the pint.

Restriction on metric units to be employed

8.—(1) Any marking indicating any length—

(a) of one metre or more shall be entirely in terms of metres and fractions of a metre; and

(b) of less than one metre shall be either entirely in terms of centimetres, and fractions of a centimetre, or entirely in terms of millimetres.

(2) Any marking indicating any area—

(a) of 0.1 square metre or more shall be entirely in terms of square metres and fractions of a square metre; and

(b) of less than 0.1 square metre shall be either entirely in terms of square decimetres and fractions of a square decimetre or entirely in terms of square centimetres and fractions of a square centimetre.

- (3) Any marking indicating any mass or weight—
 - (a) of one kilogramme or more shall be entirely in terms of kilogrammes and fractions of a kilogramme; and
 - (b) of less than one kilogramme shall be entirely in terms of grammes.
- (4) Any marking indicating any capacity—
 - (a) of one litre or more shall be entirely in terms of litres and fractions of a litre; and
 - (b) of less than one litre shall be entirely in terms of centilitres and fractions of a centilitre, or entirely in terms of millilitres.
- (5) Any marking indicating any volume—
 - (a) of 0.01 cubic metres or more shall be entirely in terms of cubic metres and fractions of a cubic metre; and
 - (b) of less than 0.01 cubic metres shall be entirely in terms of cubic centimetres and fractions of a cubic centimetre.

Marking with quantity by measurement

9.—(1) In the case of a container required by or under the Act to be marked with quantity by measurement, the marking shall comprise the numerical value of the relevant unit of measurement permitted by regulation 6 expressed in words or figures and a reference to that unit either by words or by means of a symbol or abbreviation which may lawfully be used in relation to that unit pursuant to Part II.

(2) Any indication of quantity by gross weight shall include the word “gross” or the words “including container” or other words which indicate that the marked weight includes the weight of the container.

(3) No abbreviation of the word “net” or “gross” shall be employed in the marking.

(4) Where the numerical value of the relevant unit of quantity is expressed in words, the unit of measurement shall be expressed in words and not by means of a symbol or abbreviation:

Provided that the words “kilogram” and “gram” may be used for the units of measurement “kilogramme” and “gramme” respectively.

(5) One type space shall be left between the numerical value of the relevant quantity and the name, symbol or abbreviation of the unit of measurement.

(6) Vulgar fractions shall not be expressed in a manner in which the numerator and denominator are likely to be read as referring to whole units.

(7) In the marking of the numerical value in terms of decimal fractions the decimal marker shall be expressed as either a point or a comma on the line.

(8) A metric quantity shall not be expressed as a vulgar fraction, except as, where appropriate, one half or $\frac{1}{2}$, or one quarter or $\frac{1}{4}$, of the unit.

Imperial and metric units

10.—(1) In the case of perfumes and toilet preparations other than soap, the marking shall be by quantity in metric or imperial units or both.

(2) In the case of any goods which are required to be marked with quantity by measurement other than goods to which paragraph (1) applies, the marking shall be by quantity in both imperial and metric units.

11.—(1) Where the marking is by quantity in both imperial and metric units (whether so permitted or so required by Regulation 10) the following provisions shall apply.

(2) The marking shall indicate the quantity in terms of the same measurement in the imperial system of units as in the metric system.

(3) In a case where the relevant goods are required by or under the Act to be made up in specified quantities the marking shall—

(a) first indicate the quantity in which they are made up; and

(b) if the quantity in which they are made up is in metric units, include the words “metric pack”:

Provided that sub-paragraph (b) shall apply only to goods that were at the date of making of these regulations required to be made up in specified quantities, whether both imperial quantities and metric quantities were specified or only imperial quantities.

(4) In any other case the marking may indicate the quantity first in either imperial or metric units.

(5) The indications of quantity shall be of equal size and shall be distinct but in close proximity to each other and nothing shall be inserted between them.

Marking with quantity by number

12. In the case of a container which is required by or under the Act to be marked with quantity by number, the number may be expressed in words or figures.

Position of marking, etc.

13.—(1) A marking—

(a) shall be clear, legible and conspicuous;

(b) shall be in a prominent position so that it will be readily discernible and easily read by an intending purchaser under normal conditions of purchase;

(c) shall not be hidden or obscured in any way whether by a stamp, sticker, outer wrapping, or otherwise;

(d) if it is not upon the actual container or on a label securely attached thereto shall be so placed that it cannot be removed without opening the container.

(2) Where pursuant to regulation 11(3), the words “metric pack” are included in any marking, those words shall appear within a surrounding line or on a panel which is clearly distinguished in colour from its surroundings and within which or on which there is no other written and no pictorial matter.

14.—(1) Except in the case of a marking embossed in high or low relief on any container which bears no other wording in any colour which contrasts with its background or which only bears wording in such a colour upon a stopper, lid or closure whose maximum dimension is not more than 5.0 cm. markings shall be upon a plain or inconspicuously patterned background and in a colour which is in distinct and conspicuous contrast thereto.

(2) In relation to any marking upon any transparent material, the matter which is visible through the material in the immediate vicinity of the marking when the goods are made up in or on the container shall be treated, for the purpose of this Regulation, as the background of the marking.

Size of markings.

15.—(1) In the case of a container—

(a) where the quantity by number or the numerical value of the relevant unit of measurement is expressed in figures, all the relevant figures shall be at least the height specified in the second column of the table set out in Schedule 3 in relation to—

(i) the range of quantity specified in the first column of that Schedule, appropriate to the measurement being marked, within which the quantity of goods made up in that container falls (or where the goods are made up in an imperial quantity, within which the metric equivalent of that quantity falls); or

(ii) where the marking is of area or of length or of number, the range of size of container so specified within which the size of the container in which the goods are made up falls, being a size calculated in accordance with the provisions of that Schedule;

(b) where, pursuant to regulation 11(3), the words “metric pack” are included in any marking, those words shall appear in capital letters of at least the height referred to in sub-paragraph (a).

(c) any other characters employed in any marking shall be at least half the height referred to in sub-paragraph (a), of uniform size and colour and shall be lower case characters of roman or upright sanserif type.

(2) The height of any lower case letter shall be taken to be the x-height thereof, disregarding any ascender or descender thereof.

(3) The numerator and denominator together indicating a vulgar fraction shall appear one on top of the other and for the purposes of paragraph (2)(a) shall be treated as a single figure.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Commerce for Northern Ireland on 3rd May 1976.

(L.S.)

Ernest Simpson

Assistant Secretary

SCHEDULE 1

Regulation 4

Permitted symbols and abbreviations of units of measurement which may be used for trade

PART I

METRIC UNITS

1	2	3
<i>Unit of Measurement</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
metre	m	
centimetre	cm	
millimetre	mm	
square metre	m ²	
square decimetre	dm ²	
square centimetre	cm ²	
cubic metre	m ³	
cubic centimetre	cm ³	
litre	l	
decilitre	dl	
centilitre	cl	
millilitre	ml	
tonne	t	
kilogramme	kg	kilogram
hectogramme	hg	hectogram
gramme	g	gram
milligramme	mg	milligram

PART II

IMPERIAL UNITS

<i>Unit of Measurement</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
yard	yd
foot	ft
inch	in
square yard	sq yd
square foot	sq ft
square inch	sq in
cubic yard	cu yd
cubic foot	cu ft
cubic inch	cu in
gallon	gal
quart	qt
pint	pt
fluid ounce	fl oz
hundredweight	cwt
quarter	qr
pound	lb
ounce	oz
dram	dr
grain	gr

SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 6

Permitted units of measurement which may be used for marking quantity

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Metric unit</i>	<i>Imperial unit</i>
Length	centimetre millimetre metre	yard foot inch
Area	square metre square decimetre square centimetre	square yard square foot square inch
Volume	cubic metre cubic centimetre	cubic yard cubic inch
Capacity	litre centilitre millilitre	gallon quart pint fluid ounce
Mass or weight	kilogramme gramme	hundredweight quarter pound ounce dram grain

SCHEDULE 3

Regulation 15

*Mass or weight of contents**Minimum size of Characters to be employed in marking*

Not exceeding 200 g	3 mm
Exceeding 200 g but not exceeding 1 kg	4 mm
Exceeding 1 kg	6 mm

Capacity of contents

Not exceeding 20 cl	3 mm
Exceeding 20 cl but not exceeding 1 litre	4 mm
Exceeding 1 litre	6 mm

Volume of contents

Not exceeding 200 cm ³	3 mm
Exceeding 200 cm ³ but not exceeding 1000 cm ³	4 mm
Exceeding 1000 cm ³	6 mm

Area, length and number

Size of container	
Not exceeding 12 cm	2 mm
Exceeding 12 cm but not exceeding 30 cm	3 mm
Exceeding 30 cm but not exceeding 45 cm	4 mm
Exceeding 45 cm	6 mm

For the purposes of this Schedule, the size of a container shall be treated as equal—

- (a) in the case of a rectilinear or approximately rectilinear container, to its height, length or width, whichever is the greatest;
- (b) in the case of a container with curvilinear or approximately curvilinear cross section, its height or maximum diameter, whichever is the greater.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the regulations but is intended to indicate their general purport.)

These regulations replace the Weights and Measures (Marking of Goods and Abbreviations of Units of Measurement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970 ("the Regulations of 1970").

Part II and Schedule 1 make provision as respects the symbols for, and abbreviations of, certain units of measurement which may lawfully be used for trade.

Part III makes provision as respects the manner of marking of quantities on those containers of goods required to be marked by virtue of Schedule 2, 4, 5 or 6 of the Weights and Measures Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 or by any Order under Section 15(2) of the Act. However, containers of goods required to be marked by virtue of any such Schedule or by the Weights and Measures (Dentifrices) Order (Northern Ireland) 1974 may continue to be marked in the manner provided by the Regulations of 1970, which these regulations replace, until 1st January 1978, or in the case of returnable bottles with embossed or fired-on markings until 1st January 1980.

The principal changes are:—

- (a) that only the permitted symbols and abbreviations of units of measurement set out in Schedule 1 may be used for trade to indicate such units (based on agreed international standards);
- (b) that the minimum size of markings when the contents of a container are declared in units of mass or weight, capacity and volume will be in relationship to the contents (not the dimension) of the container;
- (c) that the minimum size of markings on food containers is regulated;
- (d) that in specified cases containers shall be marked by quantity both in imperial and metric units;
- (e) that in specified cases containers holding goods made up in prescribed metric quantities shall be marked with the words "metric pack".