



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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Weights and Measures Dept. releases annual 2012 Inspection Results at Retail

Report indicates UPC scanner inaccuracy & missing prices leave room for improvement

(Glendale) – Arizona consumers and retail businesses may not always get what they pay for in 2012 when purchasing merchandise advertised and sold at Arizona retail, according to the annual inspection results released this week by the Department of Weights and Measures. According to the 2012 inspection records the agency conducted 2,585 unannounced inspections (of both UPC cash registers and price posting inspections) at businesses ranging from grocery stores, mall kiosks to gold buyers statewide.

The annual results for price posting included 1,515 stores inspected for proper price posting on goods advertised or exposed for sale where investigators audited 213,600 items. Of that total, 4,543 individual products were found to be missing prices or contained inaccurate pricing information; subsequently 116 violation notices totaling \$99,750 in non-compliance penalties were issued to retailers who failed to achieve the required 98% compliance rating.

The UPC scanner inspection results show a total of 35,176 individual items were inspected during 2012 on cash registers at 1,070 retail businesses. Of those items, 618 were found to be charging more than the advertised price by a total of \$2,146.80 in unwarranted overcharges. As a result, the Department levied 86 violation notices totaling \$29,700 in non-compliance penalties to retail businesses who failed to maintain the required 98% compliance rating and who were found to be charging a higher price than advertised.

“Consumers should appreciate that overall the Arizona retail industry has significantly improved their pricing policies having accomplished a 98% compliance rate on UPC scanning in 2012, as compared to 95% in 2011,” stated Kevin Tyne, Director of the Department of Weights and Measures, “In general, it is challenging for grocery, retail, and department stores to re-price and re-stock some thousands of individual items each Wednesday, thus emphasizing the need for a strong scanning and accurate pricing program.”

It is important to point out that this same annual report revealed that undercharges dominated the scanning inaccuracies found in 2012. There were 1,105 individual instances of retailers undercharging consumers for a total of \$4,347.25 on products advertised for sale. Civil penalties are not levied to businesses who undercharge, however any scanner inaccuracy found must be corrected within 30 minutes or the items are taken off sale.

Arizona law requires merchandised offered for sale must scan at the advertised price, and items must be marked or have a nearby sign marked with a price. A 98% compliance rating must be achieved to both scanning and pricing.

The report released today covers inspections conducted between January 1st and December 31st 2012 by state investigators throughout Arizona.

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