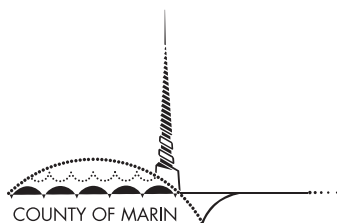


2025
Marin County
Consumer Protection Report

DOLLAR\$
&
SENSE

Protecting the interests of
the consumer and the marketplace



Department of Weights and Measures

Dear Marin County Consumer,

Welcome to the 2025 Consumer Protection Report, published by the Marin County Department of Weights and Measures.

This booklet provides shopping, fueling, and consumer protection guidance for Marin residents. It also showcases the ongoing work our department does to maintain a fair marketplace for both shoppers and businesses.

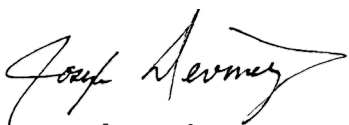
Special themes of this year's report include:

- **At the Pump:** Fueling tips to ensure you get what you pay for at the gas pump. We showcase signage and pricing requirements, as well as issues to look out for while you fuel.
- **Price Accuracy:** what to do when you encounter two different prices posted for the same item.
- **Buying by Weight:** Tips on buying items by weight and how to tell if the scale is accurate.

Thanks to ongoing outreach and oversight, last year overcharges to consumers decreased, and the accuracy of commercial scales and meters increased. This is a positive trend we hope to see continue.

We invite you to reach out to our department if you have questions or concerns about store pricing, fuel quality, the accuracy of commercial devices, or if you have suggestions for how this report can be more useful to you.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Deviney

Agricultural Commissioner

Director of Weights and Measures



Numbers at a Glance

Weights and measures expenditures	\$745,016
Weights and measures revenue	\$305,607
Total employees	14
Department hours spent protecting consumers	5,754
Businesses inspected (unique locations)	399
Total inspections performed (devices & priced items)	9,921
Consumer concerns investigated	55
Price accuracy inspections performed	265
• Items inspected for price accuracy	7,679
• Items found overcharged to the customer	151
• Items found undercharged to the customer	187
Commercial devices inspected and sealed	2,063

Most common devices inspected:

• Gas pumps	851
• Electric submeters (mobile home parks, marinas, apartments)	768
• Counter and computing scales	361
Notices of violation issued (to 148 businesses)	193

Most common violations:

- Weighing/measuring equipment not maintained accurately by businesses
- Overcharges at the register compared to posted prices in stores
- Customer not able to see price or weight of item displayed at time of purchase

All figures cover the 2025 fiscal year from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.



Special Consumer Focus

Gas Stations and Fuel Dispensing

With gas prices on the rise, it's more important than ever that meters and pricing displays comply with regulations to ensure accuracy and transparency.

Fuel stations must follow California's rules about posting and signage. Each station is required to have a price sign at the street entrance. The sign must indicate the brand, product, grade, and price of the top three grades of fuel offered at the station. Any qualifiers that would change that price (like a lower price for paying with cash, or getting a discount for buying a car wash) must be posted on the main price sign or be visible at the pump.

The price indicated on the street sign must match the price posted at the pump. If there is a discrepancy, the station must change the signage and honor the lowest of the two prices.

Fuel pumps use meters that ensure they accurately dispense fuel. Two issues to watch out for at the pump are meter 'jump' and meter 'creep.' Meter jump is when a pump starts fueling, but the meter starts at a number higher than zero. Meter 'creep' is when the pump has stopped fueling, but the meter shows that fuel is still being dispensed.

Any meter with 'jump' or 'creep' must be shut down until repaired by a registered service agent. If you suspect meter 'jump' or 'creep,' tell the station and contact our office.

In 2025, the Department investigated multiple concerns of improper station signage, meter creep, auto-shutoff malfunctions, and under-dispensing meters. As a result of these investigations, nozzles were repaired back to working order, and signage was fixed. These efforts ensure consumers get the accurate amount of fuel at the advertised price.



If you have a concern or complaint about a business in Marin, immediately report it to our office.

Report a Consumer Concern



Phone 415-473-7888
Email Marin.Dept.AG@MarinCounty.gov
Online Form Scan the QR code to access the form or visit:

www.MarinCounty.gov/Departments/AWM/Consumer-Complaint-Form

55

Consumer inquiries concerns, and complaints

25%

Decrease from the prior year

In 2025, our Department responded to 55 customer inquiries, concerns, and complaints about businesses operating in Marin. This was a 25% decrease from the prior year. Complaints often included overcharges at retailers, concerns of gas pumps “shorting” customers on fuel, and suspicion of credit/debit card skimmers.

SHOP WITH CARE

Due to frequently overcharging consumers and failing price accuracy inspections at stores across California, some businesses have had legal settlements or injunctions imposed on them through the courts.

Per publicly available court records, businesses with current and past injunctions/settlements include:

7-Eleven	Target	Safeway	Petco
Kohl’s	Best Buy	Walgreens	Staples
Rite Aid	Office Depot	CVS	Whole Foods

Price Accuracy

It is against California law for a business to charge more than the store's posted or advertised price. Customers are entitled to the lowest advertised or posted price for any items offered for sale by a store.

Marin's Weights and Measures inspectors regularly conduct price accuracy audits at businesses that use computerized point-of-sale systems (e.g., barcode/UPC scanner or price look-up codes) to verify that prices charged to customers match the prices posted or advertised by the store.

When computer-based register systems are inaccurate, customers may be overcharged without realizing they have paid more than the posted or advertised price.

When you shop, be certain to verify that the posted or advertised price is what you're paying at the register. At retailers around Marin, stickers at registers remind customers to inspect receipts and to contact us if they suspect they were overcharged.

Check Your Receipt!

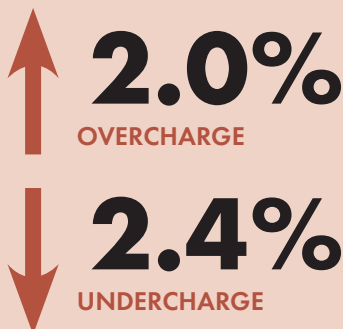
Call us if you think you were overcharged.

Marin County Weights & Measures Department
Consumer Protection is what we do.

415-473-7888

By law, you are entitled to the lowest advertised or posted price
for items offered for sale by the store.

**Are consumers
overcharged or
undercharged
more frequently?**



Marin County price accuracy inspection results. 7/1/24 - 6/30/25



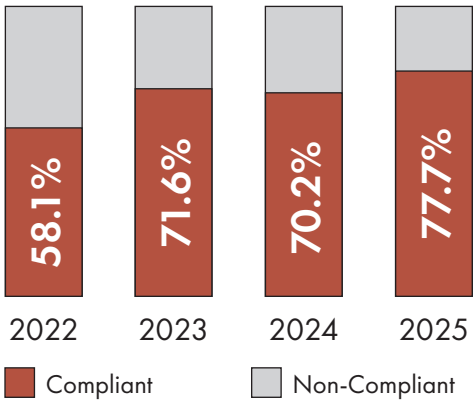
In the past year, the Department conducted price accuracy inspections in cities and towns in Marin, completing 265 inspections at 203 unique businesses across the County.

77.7% of Marin businesses complied with price accuracy requirements upon initial inspection.

When a business fails an inspection, they are re-inspected until they comply with California regulations.

To ensure equity in the marketplace and to protect businesses, inspections also identify when a business undercharges customers so that the business can improve its pricing system to charge customers the correct amount they are expecting to pay.

Marin Businesses Compliant with Price Accuracy Requirements on Initial Inspection



BUSINESS PRICING PERFORMANCE

Of 7,679 items inspected for price accuracy in 2025 in Marin, 151 (2.0%) rang up as overcharges at the register. This resulted in 96 notices of violation issued to 72 unique businesses in Marin County.

TIP FOR BUSINESSES

Be sure to remove promotional signage immediately after the expiration date of the sale or special offer. See image above - even if a sale sign says it's expired, if the business has not physically removed the sign, they must honor the sale price.



Gas Pumps

When buying gas, customers want to be sure they receive what they paid for, and the service station wants to be paid for all the gas they deliver.

To ensure fuel dispensers in Marin are accurate, inspectors test the pumps on a regular basis.

Devices dispensing a range of fuels – gasoline, diesel, propane and hydrogen – at locations such as service stations, marinas, and equipment rental agencies must meet California standards for performance.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each gas pump must be accurate to a tolerance of approximately 99.5% to meet state requirements. Only those devices meeting California's requirements receive the County of Marin Seal.

The color of the seal changes each year, and is valid for two. If you don't see the seal or suspect the pump is not functioning properly, please call us immediately at 415-473-7888.

FREE AIR & WATER

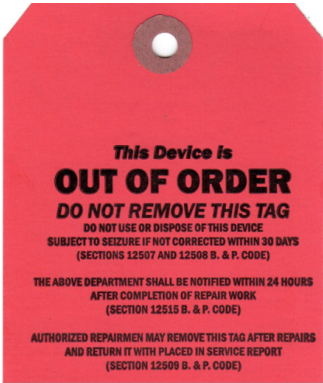
California law requires station operators to provide free compressed air, water, and an air gauge to customers who purchase gasoline or diesel fuel.



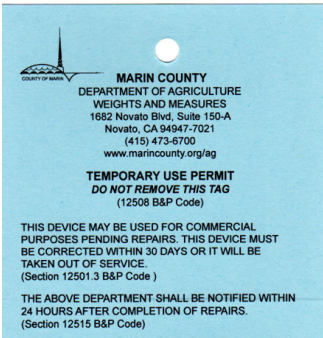
At 36 of Marin’s 67 service stations, 851 fuel pumps were inspected in the past year. Of those, 820 pumps passed inspection and were sealed, and 31 were not functioning accurately.

In 2025, 96.4% of Marin’s retail motor fuel pumps tested were found to be accurate. Gas pumps not meeting California standards are tagged for repair with either a red or blue tag.

In 2025, 18 red tags were issued to fuel pumps. A red tag means the pump was either malfunctioning or not delivering enough fuel. Red tagged pumps cannot be used until repaired by a registered service agent.



In 2025, 13 blue tags were issued to fuel pumps. A blue tag indicates the pump is delivering too much fuel. Blue tags are also issued when each pump at a station is working accurately, but on average, the station slightly under-delivers fuel. This is imbalanced in favor of the business and needs to be corrected. A blue tagged pump can be used for up to 30 days while awaiting repair.





CREDIT CARD SKIMMER ALERT

If you suspect a gas pump might contain a credit/debit card skimmer, please notify our Department and/or local law enforcement so we can investigate.

CASH OR CREDIT?

Unless signage clarifies otherwise, gas stations must offer the cash price for fuel sold to debit card customers.



Scales

Many goods are sold based on weight: fruits and vegetables, prepared take-away foods, meat and seafood, deli meats, and more!

Weighing devices are also used in a variety of specialized applications around Marin, including weighing heavy things like livestock, bulk olives, and landscape materials, or smaller, precise items like jewelry and precious metals. You'll even see scales at the farmers market.

Scales that Department inspectors find to be inaccurate in favor of the business or seller are placed **OUT OF ORDER**. The scale cannot be used in commercial transactions until it is serviced by a registered service agent.

92.4%

of Marin's Counter and Computing Scales tested in 2025 were found accurate upon the initial inspection.



ARE YOU PAYING FOR PACKAGING WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T?

It is unlawful to sell any commodity by weight without subtracting the weight of its container, wrapper or non-consumable material such as packaging.

Scales must be tared to deduct the weight of such materials so the customer pays only for the net weight of the product. Examples:

- Deli take-out containers
- Paper or plastic wrappers
- Bags
- Plates and utensils at food counters



COMMERCIAL SCALES INSPECTED IN MARIN IN 2025:

Businesses Inspected (unique locations)	114
Total Inspections Performed on Scales	492
Scales Sealed (meeting standards for use)	450

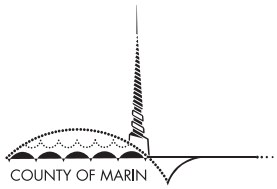
Some of the most common scales tested and sealed in Marin in the past year included:

• Computing Scales (indicates weight and price)	347
• Platform Scales (parcel shipping, dry cleaners)	35
• Livestock Scales (2,000 lbs and higher)	14
• Vehicle Scales (landscape and construction materials)	12
• Hanging Scales (produce, bulk goods)	11



KNOW THE WEIGHT

You are entitled to see the weight of the item you are purchasing. The weight display/indicator must be visible to both the customer and the operator – that’s why many scales have display screens on both sides.



County of Marin

Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures

1682 Novato Boulevard, Suite 150-A
Novato, CA 94947
415-473-6700 T 415-473-7543 F
Dial 711 CRS (California Relay Service)
MarinCounty.gov/AWM
415-473-7888 Consumer Help Line

TEAM

Joe Deviney

Agricultural Commissioner & Director of Weights and Measures

Scott Wise

Assistant Agricultural Commissioner & Assistant Director of Weights and Measures

Dann Walters

Supervising Agricultural, Weights and Measures Inspector

**Emmett Brady, Danielle Diaz, Kayla Friedrichsen, Allison Klein,
Dani Robinson, Eric Smith, Alvin Xu**

Agricultural, Weights and Measures Inspectors

Alexi Campos

Senior Agricultural Program Assistant

Tanya Nelson

Administrative Services Associate

Kelly Descalso

Administrative Services Technician

Protecting the interests of the consumer and the marketplace

Requests for accommodations may be made by calling 415-473-6700 (Voice),
415-473-3232 (TTY) or by e-mail at Marin.Dept.Ag@MarinCounty.gov.

Copies of documents are available in alternative formats, upon request.