

## FSMA Part 3: FSMA requirements for scales and weight

Scales and weight have been an integral part of the food and beverage industry for hundreds of years. Now, with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requiring companies to ensure food is not adulterated, misbranded or incorrectly labelled, scales – unsurprisingly – are involved. However, it takes a thorough reading of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, subchapter IV to discover what's required.

Scales and weight are affected in three different areas: labelling, hygiene and documentation procedures.

**1: Labelling:** Section 343 discusses how packages must have “an accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of weight, measure or numerical count” although “reasonable variations shall be permitted.”<sup>1</sup> Better to be safe than sorry and have an exact weight recorded on the label.

The most effective way to catch every single package weight is with a checkweigher. Checkweighers can be automatic or manual, heavy capacity to very light, high speed or slow and with or without a labeller, depending on the requirement.

Along with capturing the weight for labelling, data can be transmitted for real-time monitoring of production efficiency. J.A. King can specify checkweighers from a variety of manufacturers, perfectly matching the equipment to the application.



And don't forget to have your checkweigher regularly calibrated so you can provide proof of its accuracy.

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Checkweigher Calibration](#)

## 2. Hygiene:

Section 342 talks about adulteration, where food has “been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth, or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health.”<sup>2</sup> Make the most of your sanitation plan by only using scales that are corrosion resistant and able to withstand heavy washdown.

In general, scales shouldn't have a surface roughness of more than 0.8 micrometers, which allows easy cleaning and

decontamination. Watch out for holes, cavities or dead spaces where liquids and other contaminants can collect. Floor scales should have plates that can be easily lifted and, if they are pit mounted, a regular inspection of the draining mechanism is a good idea.

Another idea: Load cells mounted under your tanks never actually contact the product, unlike flow meters, giving you a hygienic and precise way to measure bulk or liquid ingredients.

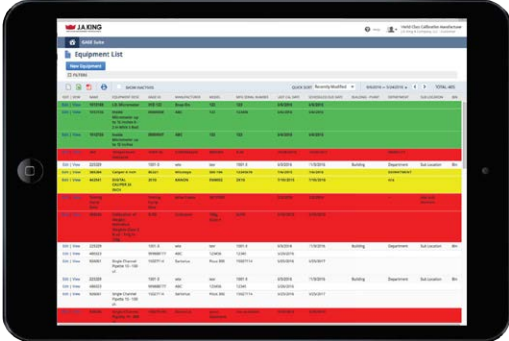


J.A. King has a range of heavy washdown scales designed for the food industry and can advise you on the best fit for your operation.

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**3 Documentation:** Section 350c addresses maintenance and inspection of records and applies to “all records relating to the manufacture, processing, packing, distribution, receipt, holding, or importation of such article ... and at any location.”<sup>3</sup>

You must be able to provide documentation which proves that your preventative measures are working effectively.



Regular calibration of your scales and checkweighers gives you the necessary documentation. And all of J.A. King’s calibrations records are stored in GageSuite, our free, on-line calibration management system, for quick access when the auditor is there.

[Learn About GageSuite](#)

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Code Title 21, Chapter 9, Subchapter IV, section 343, part e

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Code Title 21, Chapter 9, Subchapter IV, section 342, part a

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Code Title 21, Chapter 9, Subchapter IV, section 350c, part b