

City of Seattle • Consumer Affairs Unit  
Information Sheet No. 16

## Unit Prices

**Unit pricing** refers to the use of shelf tags or other signage to prominently display price per unit of weight or measure for packaged food products, paper products, and certain laundry or cleaning products offered for sale in grocery stores. The purpose of unit pricing is to provide consumers with a simple means of value comparison between different size packages of the same product.

<u>Product Net Quantity Declaration (on Label)</u>	<u>Unit Price (on Shelf Tag)</u>
oz., lb. [weight]	price per pound (lb.)
fl.oz., qt., gal. [liquid measure]	price per pint (pt.)
numerical count	price per 100 items
area	price per square yard (sq.yd.)

Unit pricing is required by Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 7.12 "Disclosure of Unit Price".

The list of products required to be unit priced is contained in SMC Section 7.12.030. Some exceptions are permitted for gourmet foods and products in small packages.

Violation of the Unit Price Code is a criminal misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$500 and/or 6 months imprisonment. The Unit Price Code was adopted in 1972.

Many states have some form of unit pricing law including: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Washington state has no unit price law.

PEANUT 8 OZ.	YOU PAY
BUTTER	\$ .90
	<b>UNIT PRICE</b>
C 0607 806	<b>\$1.80 PER LB.</b>

**Typical Unit Price Display**

Many grocery stores voluntarily display unit prices to aid their customers even when there may be no legal requirement.

There is more information on unit pricing available in a National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) pamphlet *Getting What You Pay For: Weights and Measures Tips for Consumers*. This pamphlet is available from the Consumer Affairs Unit at no charge. The Consumer Affairs Unit maintains a web site with a variety of information on weights and measures topics for consumers and businesses: [www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/esd/consumer](http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/esd/consumer).

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