



FAQ SHEET #1

SCALE CALIBRATION

- **When is it effective?**
 - Immediately, but we understand this is a new requirement so we will allow a grace period until June 2014 to have your scales calibrated
- **Why do I need to calibrate my scales?**
 - NHTSA requires scales used to determine the reduction in Load Carrying Capacity to be accurate to 1% of the scale reading and have a calibration that is traceable to NIST (link below)
 - http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/Inoper/Fre_ask_Ques.htm
 - We also calibrate our scales so that we know the vehicle being provided is not overweight (GAW, GVW), it's a safety issue for our customers.
 - Additionally, it can protect your dealership in the event of legal action by being able to show your scale readings are accurate, so the risk is mitigated
- **Why can't I calibrate them myself?**
 - You can, the manufacturer can provide you with a calibration procedure, however the calibration needs to be performed with a weight that is traceable to NIST, and renting a weight or owning one can be expensive. Consider your options when deciding how to calibrate your scales
- **The scale manufacturer said that the calibration should be good for years and I only need to check it once and a while, isn't this good enough?**
 - The manufacturer may be correct in what they are saying, however it won't meet the NHTSA requirement
- **What is the calibration interval?**
 - Annual
- **How /Where do I get my scales calibrated?**
 - There are basically four options:
 - (1) NMEDA has worked out special member pricing with Mettler-Toledo, they have a presence across all of North America. Contact JR Pepino at (614) 438-4681 or his email is JR.Pepino@mt.com just tell him you are a NMEDA member and he will assist you.
 - (2) Find a local calibration source on your own. You can find local calibration houses that will come to you and perform the calibration on-site with no real down time. Keep in mind that you want to assure you receive a calibration certificate showing traceability to NIST.
 - (3) Send back to the manufacturer: the scale manufacturer can calibrate your scales so long as they can provide a calibration certificate that shows traceability to NIST. The issues with sending back to the manufacturer are that you will be without the scales during the shipping times to and back from the manufacturer and there is a risk the calibration will be compromised during shipment. On-site calibration is highly recommended.
 - (4) Perform the calibration yourself: This is an option, but will require you to obtain your own NIST traceable calibration weights. If you choose this option, make sure you document the process and results.

- **How much will it cost?**
 - NMEDA has worked out some special pricing for members, in general if you're in a nominal travel range; the cost is about \$150-\$250 USD (\$150 if within 25 miles, \$250 if within 26-50 miles) for an on-site, no down time, calibration. This includes all the travel cost and a NIST traceable calibration certificate as well as applying the calibration sticker on your scale.
 - If you buy your own NIST traceable weight it may cost you as much as \$2,500 for the weight and then it will also need to be calibrated at prescribed intervals at additional cost.
 - Sending by mail to the scale manufacturer is another option but it is not recommended as there is a significant cost to pack and ship the scale, as well as the possibility the calibration is disturbed during shipment, and the fact you will not have the use of the scale while it is in transit.
- **Is there a grace period for calibration?**
 - The sooner you have your scales calibrated the better from a risk standpoint, however we understand there is some time involved to identify a calibration source and so we are hoping everyone can have this completed by no later than June. After June it will count as a finding in an audit.
- **What are the risks of not calibrating the scales?**
 - Customer safety foremost, if you don't know if your scales are calibrated you could be sending an over weighted vehicle to a customer
 - As NHTSA is requiring scales used to calculate Load Carrying Capacity to be calibrated, you would not comply with NHTSA requirement
 - Legal risk, there is a legal risk if you enter into litigation and the subject of weight comes up and you are not able to show your scales are calibrated, you could be putting yourself in jeopardy of losing the case
 - You can lose your QAP accreditation as you would not be in compliance with the rules
- **I just bought my scales within the past year, do I need to do anything?**
 - Typically scales are calibrated prior to leaving the manufacturer, there is a good chance your scales are in current calibration, however, you need to be able to provide objective evidence of the calibration and traceability to NIST, and so you want to ask the manufacturer if they can provide you a calibration certificate. Make sure it includes the serial number of your scale. Then you would not need to calibrate again for one year.
- **I'm a Canadian member, does this apply to me?**
 - Yes, because it is a part of the membership rules, so this requirement applies to all members whether they are in Canada or the US. The NHTSA statement was addressing the load carrying capacity for the 220lb make inoperative provision and the make inoperative does not apply to Canadian dealers, however as stated, you may be putting your customers at risk if you don't know the weight readings on your scales are accurate, so that is why NMEDA adopted this as a requirement for all members.
- **Does this require a change to my quality control manual (QCM)?**
 - It may, you will need to make sure your scale(s) are listed in the test and measurement equipment listing and the calibration interval is provided

CAN'T FIND YOUR QUESTION? Contact NMEDA for more information at qap@nmeda.org
