



Device Enforcement Program

Description

The Device Enforcement Program (Program) is responsible for minimizing measurement error in commercial transactions through regular inspection and testing of commercial weighing and measuring devices; such as supermarket checkout systems, retail motor fuel dispensers, cryogenic meters, utility submeters, and large capacity truck scales. The Program provides training and guidance to county weights and measures officials and responds to complaints related to commercial devices.

Activities

Program staff train, support, and coordinate with local officials and businesses to properly apply specifications, tolerances, and use requirements for the various devices used in the California marketplace. Device owners/users are held responsible for the condition and proper use of their devices. Fraud or careless use of commercial measuring equipment is investigated and acted upon aggressively by both local and state officials. Regional and statewide violations are coordinated primarily by program staff. Staff develops and applies effective testing, monitoring, investigative, and support resources with National consensus organizations and county staff.

Program Importance

The Program routinely provides training and assists county weights and measures officials in testing complex commercial devices that measure cryogenic gases, liquefied petroleum gas compressed natural gas and electricity. The training provided by the program is critical as these devices and products pose safety concerns to the official and others during the inspection. Without the training provided by the Program, counties would have to rely on staff from other counties who to provide training and experience with a variety of devices to perform tests or follow up on complaints. If no experienced staff is available or standards, then the follow-up and testing of some devices could not be done. As new technologies emerge program staff familiarizes themselves with the procedures involved, document them and then pass the information on to county officials so they can test the devices.

Budget

Until fiscal year 2012/13, the Program was funded entirely by General Funds. The Program is now supported by the Agriculture Fund through an administrative fee collected by counties that have established an ordinance allowing them to charge annual registration fees for commercial weighing and measuring devices.

Staffing

State staffing has gone from five (5) staff with one supervisor overseeing 58 Counties in 2008 to two staff and supervision from the Branch Chief overseeing the work of 58 Counties. The Program has suffered a 71% reduction in staffing over the last 10 years, due to retirements and elimination of General Funding in 2011.

Forecast

New devices as well as new technologies increase the difficulty in maintaining proficiency in testing the many devices being placed into service. County staff turnover is constant and the demand for training in how to test the various devices is continuous. These difficulties increase the amount of time Program staff must spend providing training and decrease the amount of time that can be dedicated to responding to complaints. With fewer staff to handle workload, things will be left undone putting consumers and competing businesses at risk of financial harm.

For more information, please contact:
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Measurement Compliance (PQV and Devices)
Budget Summary
Staffing

