



What I Do: Weights and measures inspector Cindy Lease looks out for consumer

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My job is multi-faceted. I conduct price verification in stores with scanning systems, check electronic and mechanical scales and gas pumps for accuracy, and visit grocery stores that do packaging to ensure the consumer is not getting shorted.

I work all over Madison, visiting each location once a year unless there are problems, in which case I would visit more often until the issues are resolved.

Since I'm visiting so many locations, I don't spend a lot of time in the office except to do paperwork. I usually visit two to six stores per day.

I'm motivated to make sure that as a consumer I'm getting what I pay for and protecting consumers so that they are being treated fairly. Consumers might not know that they are getting shorted on the amount in a package, so it's my job to check that what the label says for weight or amount is indeed what's in the package.

Sometimes a marketing strategy used by a store gets in the way of the proper method of sale, so I have to teach the store manager or owner what they have to do to be in compliance.

I've worked in this career for 20 years. I was in the state Weights and Measures Division for 13 years and have been with the city for seven years. I am self-motivated and have to keep to a schedule so that I get to the stores on my list each day.

I bring my own computer with a printer and scanner to check on price accuracy. To determine how many items to scan, I go by the number of registers located in the store. If there are four or more registers, I check 50 items. For less than four registers, I check 25 items throughout the store.

I follow a three-step procedure to determine if the store is charging accurately. I use a handbook that provides me with guidelines if I need to check on specific situations. To check gas pumps, I have a special trailer-mounted 103-gallon prover that I use. To check scales including those at farmers' markets, I have a weight kit with 25- and 50-pound weights.

Inspectors get trained by a senior inspector, and I was trained by Jim Hoffman. He did a great job teaching me to take a step back to look at the big picture in each situation.

What I Do features area residents who have interesting or unique jobs. To suggest someone to feature, contact Jill Carlson at jillcarlson1957@gmail.com with the name, contact information and a brief description of what the person does.

