

INTERNATIONAL
RECOMMENDATION

OIML R 79

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Labeling requirements for prepackaged products

Exigences pour l'étiquetage des produits préemballés



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Foreword

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This publication – reference OIML R 79, edition 1997 (E) – was developed by the OIML technical committee TC 6 *Prepackaged products*. It was sanctioned by the International Conference of Legal Metrology in 1996 and supersedes the previous edition dated 1989.

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LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPACKAGED PRODUCTS

1 Scope

1.1 This Recommendation covers requirements for the labeling of prepackaged products with constant nominal content with respect to:

- a) the identity of the product;
- b) the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer or retailer and
- c) the net quantity of the product.

1.2 Prepackaged products with variable content are not addressed in this Recommendation and would include additional requirements if addressed in national regulations.

1.3 Prepackaged products, unless subject to other specific laws or regulations, shall be labeled in accordance with this Recommendation before being offered for sale.

1.4 This Recommendation does not cover existing national regulations established for reasons of health, safety or tax, or for other purposes such as date limit for sale or use, storage temperature, etc.; however, such labeling should be taken into account as appropriate. Declarations of ingredients on package labels or nutritional information on food products, whether compulsory or not, are also not covered by this Recommendation.

2 Terminology

2.1 Prepackaged product

Any commodity that is enclosed in a container or wrapped in any manner, and for which its quantity has been determined and indicated on its label prior to being offered for sale.

2.2 Net quantity

The quantity of the identified product in the package exclusive of wrappers and any other material packed with such product.

Note: This term relates to specifications on a package and does not account for the actual contents in an individual package. The procedures for determining whether a production lot meets regulatory requirements are provided in OIML R 87 *Net contents in packages*.

2.3 Label

Any written, printed, or graphic matter affixed to, applied to, attached to, blown into, formed or molded into, embossed on, or appearing upon a package containing any product for purposes of branding, identifying, or giving any information with respect to the product or to the contents of the package; however, an inspector's tag or other non-promotional text affixed to or appearing on a product shall not be deemed to be a label that requires the label information prescribed by this Recommendation.

2.4 Principal display panel

The part of a package that is most likely to be displayed, presented, shown or examined under normal and customary conditions of display.

2.5 Person(s)

Both singular and plural, as the case demands, including individuals, partnerships, corporations, companies, societies and associations.

2.6 Consumer package

A package that is customarily produced or distributed for sale to final purchasers through retail sales agencies or other means.

2.7 Non-consumer package

Any package intended solely for industrial or institutional use or for wholesale distribution.

3 Identity of the product

3.1 The principal display panel on a prepackage shall bear a specification of the identity of the product unless the wrapper is transparent, thus rendering the product easily identifiable.

3.2 The identity of the product shall be a conspicuous feature of the principal display panel and shall be in such type size and so positioned as to make it easy to read and understand.

3.3 The identity of the product shall be in terms of at least one of the following designations in the order of preference listed:

- a) the name specified in or required by any applicable national law or regulation;
- b) the common or usual name of the product;
- c) the generic name or other appropriately descriptive term such as a specification which includes a statement of function.

4 Name and place of business of the manufacturer, packager, distributor or importer

4.1 The label of a prepackaged product shall specify conspicuously the name and place of business of the person responsible for any of the following: manufacturing, packing, distributing, importing or retailing the product. When the product is not manufactured or packaged by the person whose name appears on the label, the name may be qualified by a phrase that reveals the connection such person has with the product, for example: “manufactured for ...”, “distributed by ...”, “marketed by ...”, “imported by ...” or “sold by ...”.

Note: In some cases, the identity of the manufacturer or packer may be added as a code if permitted by national regulations.

4.2 The statement of the place of business, with complete mailing address, shall be in accordance with the national laws and postal usage or may be represented by an indicator (such as a code number) if permitted by national regulations.

5 Declared net quantity of the prepackaged product

5.1 A prepackaged product shall bear a declaration of the net quantity of the product on the principal display panel. The declaration may be made at any one of the following locations: at the initial place of packaging, at importation, or at the place where offered for sale.

Note 1: The metrological requirements for net contents in packages are covered in OIML R 87 *Net content in packages*.

Note 2: For some products, national regulations may require the labeling of *Drained mass*.

5.2 Requirements and exemptions for small and mixed prepackages shall be in accordance with national regulations.

Note: The term *Small packages* includes such items as individual packets of salt, pepper, sugar, individually wrapped pieces of candy, etc. Mixed packages are those containing two or more individual packages or units of dissimilar commodities.

5.3 The net quantity shall be expressed in terms of the largest whole unit of mass, volume, length, area, or a combination of these units in accordance with Annex A.

5.3.1 Depending on national requirements and customs, the net quantity statement for a specific product may be expressed as follows:

- a) volume (at a specified reference temperature determined in accordance with national regulations) if the product is liquid or viscous. Normally, the reference temperature would not appear on the label;
- b) mass if the product is solid, semi-solid or viscous, a mixture of solid and liquid, or the solid part of a mixture of a solid and liquid;
- c) length in micrometres is used primarily in expressing thicknesses less than 1 mm for some products such as polyethylene films;
- d) quantities based firmly on established general consumer usage and trade custom, if such quantities provide accurate and adequate information to the purchaser. For example, the declaration of contents of a liquid by mass, or of a solid, semi-solid, or viscous product by volume or numerical count may be used.

5.3.2 In the case of a product packed in a container designed to deliver the product under pressure, the statement shall declare the net quantity in mass that will be expelled when the instructions for use are followed. The propellant is included in the net quantity statement. Statements of quantity shall be the kilogram, gram or milligram.

5.4 Statements of a quantity in terms of count shall be expressed in whole numbers.

5.5 Presentation of information

5.5.1 Statements of a quantity less than a whole number may contain decimal fractions to no more than three places, provided that the declaration complies with subclause 5.5 and Table 2.

5.5.2 Statements of the net quantity shall appear in easily legible boldface type or print that contrasts conspicuously with the background and with other information on a package; however, when the value of the net quantity is blown, embossed, or molded on the surface of the package, then all other required label information shall be provided conspicuously elsewhere on the surface or on a label.

5.5.3 Statements of net quantity shall be in letters and numerals in a minimum type size established in relationship to either the area of the principal display panel of the package or the quantity of the packaged contents. (See Annex B).

5.6 Significance of numbers on labels

In general, the number used on a label shall be shown to three figures in the decimal system. Three exceptions are permitted:

- a) quantities below 100 g, 100 mL, 100 cm³, 100 cm², or 100 cm may be shown to two figures;
- b) any final zeros to the right of the decimal mark need not be expressed;
- c) if the quantity is less than one, it shall be shown in the decimal system with the figure zero preceding the decimal mark. Statements such as A half kilogram@ are not acceptable.

6 Misleading practices

6.1 Fill level: Packages shall be filled in such a manner that a purchaser may not reasonably be misled with respect to the quantity or identity of the product it contains, taking into consideration any recognized and accepted production practices that may be necessary for the manufacturer or packer.

6.2 Package design and display: Packages shall be manufactured, constructed or displayed in such a manner that a purchaser may not reasonably be misled with respect to the quantity or identity of product contained therein.

6.3 If the prepackaged product is labeled on more than one location or its package, the information on all labels shall be equivalent and in accordance with the requirements of this Recommendation.

7 Exemptions

Exemptions from required information on prepackage labels may be made on the basis of national practice; however, such exceptions shall be explicitly stated in national regulations.

ANNEX A
UNITS OF MEASUREMENT AND SYMBOLS
(Mandatory)

A.1 Units of measurement shall be expressed in either words or symbols. Table 1 provides the unit and the appropriate symbol for measurements.

Table 1 - Units of measurement

Unit	Symbol ^(a)
milligram	mg
gram	g
kilogram	kg
tonne	t
litre ^(b)	L or l
millilitre	mL or ml
micrometre	µm
millimetre	mm
centimetre	cm
decimetre	dm
metre	m
square millimetre	mm ²
square centimetre	cm ²
square metre	m ²
cubic centimetre	cm ³
cubic decimetre	dm ³
cubic metre	m ³

^(a) Neither a period nor the letter “s” should be used after any of the symbols.

^(b) The alternative symbol for the litre, L, was adopted by the General Conference of Weights and Measures (CGPM) in order to avoid the risk of confusion of the letter l and the number 1. The script letter *l* is not an approved symbol for litre.

A.1.1 A single space shall be used to separate the number from the unit of measurement.

A.1.2 Appropriate phrases such as “net”, “net mass”, “net contents” or “net quantity” may be used in connection with the net quantity declaration. Such phrases may appear either before or after the net quantity declaration.

A.1.3 The unit used depends on the type of measure and net quantity of product. Table 2 indicates the correct unit to use for a variety of measures and quantities.

Table 2 - Choice of units

Type of measure	Net quantity of product (q)	Units
volume ^(a) (liquids)	$q < 1000 \text{ mL}$ $1000 \text{ mL} \leq q$	mL (ml) L (l)
volume - cubic (solids)	$q \leq 1000 \text{ cm}^3$ (1 dm ³) $1 \text{ dm}^3 < q < 1000 \text{ dm}^3$ $1000 \text{ dm}^3 \leq q$	cm ³ , mL (ml) dm ³ , L (l) m ³
mass ^(b)	$q < 1 \text{ g}$ $1 \text{ g} \leq q < 1000 \text{ g}$ $1000 \text{ g} \leq q$	mg g kg
length ^(c)	$q < 1 \text{ mm}$ $1 \text{ mm} \leq q < 100 \text{ cm}$ $100 \text{ cm} \leq q$	mm mm or cm m
area	$q < 100 \text{ cm}^2$ (1 dm ²) $1 \text{ dm}^2 \leq q < 100 \text{ dm}^2$ (1 m ²) $1 \text{ m}^2 \leq q$	mm ² or cm ² dm ² m ²

^(a) See 5.3.1 a

^(b) See 5.3.1 b

^(c) See 5.3.1 c

ANNEX B

TYPE SIZE OF LETTERS AND NUMERALS FOR STATEMENTS OF NET QUANTITY ON CONSUMER PACKAGES (Informative)

B.1 A consensus has not been achieved on a minimum type size for the lettering required for labeling prepackaged products. This Annex gives the current requirements in the USA and in the EU as examples only.

B.2 Examples of minimum type size requirements

B.2.1 In the United States, for example, the minimum height requirements of numbers and letters in relation to the area of the principal display panel of the package is shown in Table 3. These requirements have been adopted by the National Conference on Weights and Measures and published in the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 130, "Uniform Laws and Regulations", 1996.

B.2.2 Area of principal display panel of the package

The area (not including the tops, bottoms, flanges at tops and bottoms of cans, and shoulders and necks of bottles and jars) shall be determined as follows:

B.2.2.1 In the case of a rectangular package, where one entire side can properly be considered to be the principal display panel side, the product of the height \times the width of that side.

B.2.2.2 In the case of a cylindrical or nearly cylindrical package, 40 % of the product of the height of the package \times the circumference.

B.2.2.3 In the case of any other shaped package, 40 % of the total surface of the package, or an area considered to be a principle display panel of the package according to subclause 2.4.

Table 3 - Minimum height of numbers and letters

Area of principal display panel in square centimetres (A)	Minimum height of numbers and letters in millimetres	Minimum height: label information blown, formed or molded on surface of container in millimetres
$A \leq 32$	1.6	3.2
$32 < A \leq 161$	3.2	4.8
$161 < A \leq 645$	4.8	6.4
$645 < A \leq 2581$	6.4	7.9
$2581 < A$	12.7	14.3

B.2.3 In the European Union, for example, the Council Directive 76/211/EU prescribes the minimum type size in relation to the quantity of the net contents as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Minimum height of numbers and letters

Net contents (C)	Minimum height of numbers and letters in millimetres
$C \leq 50$ g (or mL)	2
50 g (or mL) $< C \leq 200$ g (or mL)	3
200 g (or mL) $< C \leq 1$ kg (or L)	4
1 kg (or L) $< C$	6