

Media Release

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Worrying Results for Whisky Drinkers

Trading Standards announce results of investigation into use of spirit measures in pubs - 'Fair Measure 2011' - and finds a wide variation, both short and over measure, from the stated amount. (2010 results in brackets)

SCOTSS today released the results of their 'Fair Measure 2011' Project which took place over the late summer in the period coinciding with the Edinburgh Festival and the busiest time of year for tourism in Scotland.

The object of the project, which was co-ordinated by SCOTSS, the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland, was to check the accuracy of spirit measures sold in pubs right across Scotland. Between 1st of August and 17th September, Trading Standards Officers in 17 (18) of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities visited 165 (189) licensed premises and purchased hand poured drinks including malt whisky.

A total of 334 (370) samples were purchased; of these a disappointing 146 (166), 44% (45%) of the total resulted in a short measure less than the 25ml or 35ml legal spirit measure sold in each premises. Some authorities reported individual deficiencies of almost 20%.

This is the 5th year of the project and it's disappointing to report that there's been little improvement over the years, 45% short measure in 2006, 44% short 5 years later.

In most cases publicans have been issued with guidance on how to ensure correct measures are dispensed and advised that when open measures are used, delivery should be conducted so that the purchaser can see what they are being served if they choose. Others have been issued with a warning letter. However, where short measure has been significant reports will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Announcing the results, Neil Coltart, Chairman of SCOTSS said,
"This is a very disappointing outcome and the results certainly justify local authorities carrying out this sort of project. The extremes of measures at both ends of the spectrum show that we need to work with the licensed trade to train staff to provide accurate measures to consumers"

Mr Coltart added,

“It is a matter of concern that few measures tested were completely accurate. For health and safety reasons as well as the obvious fair measure, Scottish consumers need to have confidence in the accuracy of measures of all types of alcohol that are supplied in licensed premises.”

If anyone wishes further information on the work that local authority trading standards services undertake in relation to weights and measures, or any other legislative area they should contact their local office which can be found through the SCOTSS website www.scotss.org.uk

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Note to Editors

SCOTSS is the professional body which represents trading standards services in all 32 Scottish local authorities. It coordinates fair trading, safety and weights & measures issues across the country. As a section of the Trading Standards Institute its purpose is to promote excellence and enhance the professionalism of its members in support of informing consumers, encouraging honest businesses and targeting rogue traders.

This project involved statutory duties that local authorities have under the Weights & Measures Act 1985 to ensure that quantities prescribed for public sale are provided accurately as indicated. There are criminal penalties of a fine up to £5000 for anyone who provides inaccurate measures.

SCOTSS spokespeople are available for interview; please contact

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For a full copy of the project parameters please contact:

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