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## If Scales Aren't Certified by Auditor, Don't Trust Them

HAMILTON, Ohio – With gold trading at between \$1,540 and \$1,791 an ounce the past year, and other precious metals also gaining in value, people are finding that there are more and more businesses interested in buying their jewelry and other items made of or containing precious metals.

When these transactions occur, a scale is involved because the price in most instances is based on weight – and big money can be gained or lost if a scale is not adjusted properly. Consumers in Butler County should make sure before going ahead with any transaction that the scale being used is certified by the Auditor's Office.

On Feb. 22-24, a business from Toledo set up a temporary space in downtown Hamilton to buy gold, silver and other precious metals. Their scales did not pass our inspection on Friday, Feb. 22, and Auditor Roger Reynolds pulled the scales out of service. The company acquired a new scale on Saturday and passed a new inspection.

“Consumers really must be wary of these businesses,” Reynolds said. “This company did not notify us that they were coming into the county and the scales were off in favor of the business.”

Reynolds suggests that potential sellers check the scales and make sure they are certified by the Auditor's Office. If they are not certified, contact the Weights & Measures Division of the Auditor's Office at 513-785-6318.

All businesses engaged in buying or selling precious metals must also have a commercial National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) -approved scale to weigh these metals. Most of

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*The Hamilton JournalNews as well as West Chester Buzz, a product of Cincinnati.com and the Cincinnati Enquirer, reported on this story.*

*To view those articles, as well as the video from West Chester Buzz, select the following links:*

**West Chester Buzz:**

<http://westchesterbuzz.com/2013/03/06/what-is-your-gold-worth/>

**Hamilton JournalNews:**

<http://www.journal-news.com/news/news/unauthorized-scale-shuts-down-gold-buyer/nWby8/>

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these devices are Class II scales, which are used in high precision weighing. It takes Class II weights to test these scales. Class II weights are so precise that the oils on a human hand can make those weights inaccurate. The inspector either has to pick the weights up by clean gloves or by tongs in order to use them.

The Butler County Auditor's Office just recently purchased a set of Class II weights, providing our inspectors the freedom to go to these businesses unannounced to check the accuracy of the devices. Our Weights and Measures Class II weight kit can accurately check as little as 1 milligram up to 1 kilogram of weight.

In the past, our inspectors would have to depend on a registered service agency that had Class II weights. The service agency would have to call the business and make an appointment with them and then test the scale with a weights and measures inspector present.

"As we saw on Friday, having these Class II weights allowed us to do a spot check and enabled us to take inaccurate scales out of service – protecting consumers," Reynolds said.

Inspectors from the Auditor's Office will continue to go around the county and conduct spot checks on behalf of the community, said Reynolds.