

# How heavy is your luggage?

Holidaymakers are being advised to be wary of luggage weighers that can be used to help avoid excess baggage charges at airports. Trading Standards officers at the City of Edinburgh Council have tested some of the models and found big variations in accuracy, with one actually breaking during the trial.



Trading Standards officers tested six different digital and analogue models, ranging in price from £3 – £17. The most accurate was out by less than 1% but the worst was wrong by 500g when weighing a 5kg case. Variations were also noted when using different copies of the same product.

Cllr Robert Aldridge, Environment Leader, said: “These gauges don’t have to go through the same controls as weighing machines at airports or in trade. The errors can also be made much worse depending on how they are used, especially when trying to hold a heavy case and read the display at the same time. For greater peace of mind we suggest people follow our tips, but they should always give themselves some leeway.”

Top tips for avoiding excess baggage charges:

Remember that even the best gauges are only meant to be a guide so leave some room for error.

A digital scale with a ‘hold’ function may be useful if you are going to be using it on your own.

Have someone else read the scale while you hold it, or mount the gauge from a stable point.

Keep the gauge as still as possible, leaving time for it to settle.

Leave room for items, such as any toiletries, that you may have to move into your hold luggage because of gate restrictions.

Remember that some of the gauges will not have been designed for use in hot or humid conditions, so it may provide a different reading on the way home.

Leave space for presents coming back.

Trading Standards also advise asking if a vacant check-in desk at the airport can be used to weigh luggage before checking-in; this might avoid having to re-queue if bags need packed differently. However, even the airport baggage weighers can be subject to error because of their high levels of use. Trading Standards Officers advise you to check the indication reads zero before putting your baggage on. If travellers feel their baggage is not correctly weighed they should raise this with airport staff.