



## AT-A-GLANCE FOOD LABEL COMPLIANCE

I see a whole lot of non-compliant labels on stellar small batch products. No biggie some think. Thing is, this can lead to fines, problems with retailers down the road, issues at inspections...basically a whole lot of hassle for no good reason. So we're gonna (try at least) to demystify the basics of label compliance. These are the three biggest mistakes I see on a label and how to fix them.

### #1 : MISSING INFORMATION ON FRONT LABEL

Your front label (fancifully called your Principle Display Panel in the regulations) needs to contain two important things.

#### #1 : Product name.

**Use the correct product name.** Did you know that a salad dressing has to include an "egg yolk containing ingredient?" Why would you. Search the internet for a standard of identity for your product before using a name that has a legal definition to make sure your product is in compliance.

**Make the product name the most prominent thing on the front panel.** As in, bigger or bolder than your branding/logo.

#### #2 : Net Weight Statement.

**Use the correct statement language.**

Solid products must use one of the following:

Net Weight      Net Wt.      NET WT

Liquid products must use one of the following:

No verbiage      Net      Net Contents

**Make sure you under report.** If your fill level ends up between 2.1 - 2.25 oz use 2 oz on the label.

**Use both US measurement and metric measurement.** For example,

2 FL OZ / 59 ML

NET. 1 GAL (3.7 L)

NET WT 2 OZ (56.5g)

Net Wt. 3 lb / 1.3 kg

**Make sure the statement contrasts with the background, is easy to read, and is in the lower 1/3 of your front label (aka principal display panel or PDP).**

**Figure out what font height your statement needs to be.** Here we do some math (see THE MATH page 2).

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#1 : Determine the legal size of your PDP. You'll need this for step 2. For a box this is the height x width of the largest side of the box. For a cylinder this is 40% of the total surface area available for labelling (typically, height of jar x circumference).

#2 : **Find your legal PDP size in the table below to determine the required height of your net weight statement.** This height is measured by the lowercase letter "o." Use all caps so this doesn't look obscene.

PDP size (sq in)	Height of statement
0 - 4.99	1/16"
5 - 24.99	1/8"
25 - 99.99	3/16"
100 - 399.99	1/4"
400 +	1/2"

**WHAT'S THE REQUIREMENT FOR YOUR LABEL?**

**AT-A-GLANCE  
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COMPLIANCE****#2 : MISSING INFORMATION ON THE INFORMATION PANEL**

Here we have another fancy name. The Information Panel is considered the panel directly to the right of the PDP. So the side panel of a box or the back of a label on a jar. Here you need 3 important things.

#1 : Nutrition Facts (see page 3).

#2 : Ingredient List.

**Position ingredient list directly below or to the side of the nutrition facts.**

**List out the ingredients in descending order by weight.** Even for a liquid product that has a net weight statement in volume we use weight here.

**Call out ingredients as organic if you have the proper registration.** This is THE ONLY place you can say the word organic if you aren't a certified organic handler. Be careful though, you may need a state registration (ex. an OPPER in California).

**Include an allergen statement if your product contains one of the 8 major FDA food allergens (as an ingredient or sub-ingredient).** Position this statement directly below your ingredient list. A statement that reads "May contain x,y,z" if you use shared equipment is not required, but is a smart thing to include for liability reasons.

**Use a font that is a minimum of 1/16" tall.**

#2 : Contact Info.

**Position directly under your Ingredient Statement.** As in no, not even a a cute little leaf in between the two, or a "visit us on Instagram."

**Start with a relation statement.** If you do not manufacture your product, you'll need a relation statement like Manufactured For, Bottled For, Handcrafted For, Lovingly Cooked For, or some other unique language

**Include the needed contact info.** Yes we live in the 21st century, but unless your address is listed in a current city directory or telephone book you must include your company name, street address, city, state, and zip. Listed in the phone book? No need to include the street address, just everything else.

**And please make it generally readable.**

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### #3 : NO NUTRITION TABLE

Ya know, that table that shows the calories, fat, etc.

#1 : Do you need nutrition facts?

**NO** if you have fewer than an average of 100 full-time equivalent employees and fewer than 100,000 units of that product sold in the United States in a 12-month period. Make sure to annually submit your Small Business Nutrition Labelling Exemption (find out where by searching that term online).

**YES** if you don't qualify for that exemption

**YES** if you want the average consumer to buy your product or medium to large size retails to carry your product.

### RESOURCES

Try as I might, it would be unrealistic to answer every question about food labelling in a 4 page fact sheet.

#1 : Follow some helpful links.

I like this [FDA Food Labelling Guide](#) because it has pictograms.

Here are all the [font size requirements](#) for the 2020 nutrition panels.

And the [full regulation](#) just in case you're looking for some bedtime reading.

#2 : Help a designer out.

**Put all these specifics in a document for your designer.** Turns out most designers don't know the regulations and will set you up with a beautiful label that could get you in trouble down the road. You can purchase my template in my shop.

#2 : Have a professional review your labels.

**Better safe than sorry.** I offer food label review services for real food products or you can search for Food Label Review and find other professionals.