

Guidelines for Testing Pressure Canner Gauges

County Extension Agents have offered annual pressure canner testing clinics so clientele can get their dial gauges tested yearly – a practice strongly recommended by the National Center for Home Food Preservation. Because improper pressure canning can result in severe illness or death, it is important that everyone understands the risks involved and that we use guidelines for pressure canner testing that have been established by the National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>).

Who Should Conduct Pressure Canner Testing Clinics?

Only those Agents or others recommended by the Regional Program Director should conduct pressure testing clinics. Get trained on how to use one before trying to test the gauges of clients.

Dial Gauge Tester to Be Use during Pressure Canner Testing Clinics

If you choose to test pressure canner gauges, **you will need to use the National Presto Industries testing unit 81288 for dial gauges, which uses an air pump and master gauge.** The cost for the testing unit is \$89.99 which includes an annual examination of the master gauge and examination of other parts as needed. County Food Protection Management funds (if available) or other appropriate sources of funds may be used to pay for the testing unit.

To order the unit, contact:

Test Kitchen
National Presto Industries, Inc.
3925 North Hastings Way
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703-3703
1-800-368-2194
e-mail: contact@gopresto.com

<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/educators/Prestotester.pdf>

The air pump gauge tester **will test canners made by Presto, National (those made by the National Pressure Cooker Company), Magic Seal (sold at Montgomery Ward) and Maid of Honor (sold at Sears).** However, it is more accurate and safer to use than Presto's older testing unit which uses steam. Unfortunately, **we will no longer be able to test pressure canners that are manufacturer by companies other than those listed above.** Clients who have pressure canners manufactured by other companies (such as Mirror) will need to contact the manufacturer directly to get their gauges tested.

Form to use when conducting Pressure Canner Testing Clinics

The Dial Gauge Inspection and Accuracy Form (see attached) developed by the National Center for Home Food Preservation (revised 5/2007) is the only form to be used by Agents who test pressure canner gauges. The form allows for the Agent to do a visual inspection of the gauge and a designated place to record the results of the gauge test.

Complete **two copies** of the form and have the client sign it. Keep one copy on file in the County Extension office for **1 year**.

In addition to the test results, Agents must distribute ***Preserving Food: Using Pressure Canners***, written by Dr. Elizabeth Andress with Georgia Cooperative Extension. This publication provides great "how-to" information for clientele. That publication is available electronically from the following link:

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/uga_using_pres_can.pdf

In addition, there are a number of publications available from the National Center for Home Food Preservation as well as Georgia Cooperative Extension that you may distribute as well. For both the novice and seasoned canner, the book ***So Easy to Preserve***, is highly recommended and can be obtained from Georgia Cooperative Extension. References from Georgia Cooperative Extension can be obtained from the following web site (the book will need to be ordered):

<http://www.soeasytopreserve.com>

Dial Gauge Inspection and Accuracy

This form can be used with a master gauge testing unit*
(Not for use with maximum thermometers)

Dial gauges should be checked for accuracy and overall condition every year prior to the beginning of canning season. If you use your dial gauge canner throughout the year, check it at the same time every year.

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

CONDITION OF GAUGE:

Good Rusty Broken, cracked Interior moisture Cover too scratched to read

Comments: _____

ACCURACY OF DIAL GAUGE:

Results:

When MASTER reads 5 psi, YOUR GAUGE reads _____ psi. (psi = pounds per square inch)

When MASTER reads 11 psi, YOUR GAUGE reads _____ psi.

When MASTER reads 15 psi, YOUR GAUGE reads _____ psi.

RECOMMENDATION:*

- If your gauge reads high or low by **two (2) pounds (psi) or less**, you may use it with the following compensation: (check one)

If your gauge reads up to two (2) pounds **higher** than the master gauge, you **must add** that amount of difference to the required pressure so you don't under process your food.

For example, if the MASTER gauge reads 11 psi and your gauge reads 12 psi (1 pound higher than the master gauge), process at 12 psi when the instructions say 11 psi, or 13 psi when the instructions say 12 psi, or 7 psi when the instructions say 6 psi, etc.

If your gauge reads up to two (2) pounds **lower** than the master gauge, you may subtract the same amount it differs from the required pressure. (In this case, you may also use the pressure stated in the instructions for added safety.)

For example, if the MASTER gauge reads 11 psi and your gauge reads 10 psi (1 pound lower than the master gauge), you may process at 10 psi when the instructions say 11 psi, or 11 psi when the instructions say 12 psi, or 5 psi when the instructions say 6 psi, etc.

- If your gauge reads high or low by **more than two (2) pounds**, replace.

*These recommendations for adjustment are based on information proved by National Presto Industries, 2002, in instructions for Presto Testing Unit 81288. 05/07, National Center for Home Food Preservation

Received

Owner of Dial Gauge

County Extension Agent - FCS

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