

MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
Consumer Affairs Division
RESEARCH & PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (RPMU)
QUARTERLY SURVEY OF HARDWARE ITEMS
(First Quarter Report, January to March 2010)

1.0 BACKGROUND

Since October 2003, surveys have been conducted on a quarterly basis in Trinidad to monitor the prices of hardware items. Beginning in 2007, the Consumer Affairs Division in partnership with the Consumer Affairs Unit of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), commenced the survey of hardware prices in Tobago.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the survey are to:

- Obtain prices of selected hardware products at various hardwares;
- Use the information for a comparison of the prices in the various hardware retail stores;
- Identify trends with respect to price movements of the selected hardware items;
- Promote and facilitate the dissemination and exchange of construction information among Government agencies, interested parties and the general public to allow for informed policy making and purchasing decisions, respectively;
- Provide a primary source of information for the purposes of making decisions, estimating costs of construction, preparing feasibility studies and conducting research related to the construction sector; and
- Update the business community and the general public on the prices of basic construction materials to limit the possibility of price manipulation by some traders.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Report presents and analyses the findings of the first quarter survey 2010 conducted over the period January to March. In keeping with basic statistical requirements governing surveys the following methodology was utilized:

2.1 Methodology

1. Hardware items were chosen based on the basic needs of homeowners when building or repairing homes.
2. Officers of the Research and Project Management Unit visited retail hardware outlets that cover the four cardinal points of Trinidad. It should be noted Officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit of the THA did not survey Tobago over the period October to December 2009, as such; a comparison of Tobago's prices cannot be made.
3. The data was compiled and analyzed in house and prepared as a report.

2.2 Sample Size

Requests for information were sent to fifty-three (53) hardwares and nine Electrical & Plumbing outlets nationwide.

3.0 RESULTS OF SURVEY

As in previous surveys not all outlets carried 100% of the items surveyed. However, most of them carried more than 75% of the items. Prices were collected from twenty-seven (27) hardwares, six (6) Electrical & Plumbing outlets in twenty-one (21) commercial centres in Trinidad and from six (6) hardwares in Tobago over the period January to March 2010.

4.0 TRINIDAD

PRICE COMPARISON: January - March 2010 and October – December 2009

The results of the survey showed a rise in the average price of twenty-nine (69.05%) of the forty-two items in the survey. This ranged from a minimal rise of 0.28% in Binding Wire (1 lb) to a high of 12.61% in Primer (Kaleidoscope) (5 gal) as illustrated in **Table 4.1**. Additionally, seven (16.70%) items increased in price by more than 5%. These items were:

- Pitch Pine 2"x6" (dressed) (per ft) – (5.09%)
- Primer (Kaleidoscope) (5 gal) – (12.61%)
- Oil Paint (Berger 404 Gloss) (1 gal) – (6.72%)
- Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope Supreme Gloss) (1 gal) – (7.73%)
- Emulsion Paint (Trinity Weather Resistant) (1 gal) – (6.15%)
- Kaleidoscope Supreme Emulsion (1 gal) – (11.60%)
- I beam (3") (1 lgth 20') – (5.28%)

In terms of price decreases, thirteen items or 30.95% experienced a drop in their average prices, as shown in Table 4.1. This ranged from -0.59% for Concrete Nails (1 box 2") to -4.68% for Gravel (1 load). No items reflected a decrease in price by more than 5%.

The following Table represents a comparison of the average cost of hardware items collected in Trinidad for the period January to March 2010, with that from October to December 2009. The Table also illustrates percentage increases or decreases that occurred over the period under review.

4.1 Average cost and percentage change of selected hardware items from October to December 2009 in comparison to January to March 2010, in Trinidad.

ITEM	UNIT	Oct to Dec 2009	Jan to Mar 2010	% Change
Cement	1 bag	47.92	48.94	2.14
Steel Bars 3/8" (smooth)	1 lgth 20'	21.38	21.02	-1.67
Steel Bars 1/2" (smooth)	1 lgth 20'	30.56	29.83	-2.39
Steel Bars 5/8" (smooth)	1 lgth 20'	53.02	52.10	-1.73
BRC 6x6x10g	per ft	6.08	6.16	1.36
Binding Wire	1 lb	8.03	8.05	0.28
PVC 1/2" Cold	20 ft	19.07	18.41	-3.47
CPVC 1/2" Hot	20 ft	25.65	24.75	-3.52
PVC 1 1/2" Waste	20 ft	34.97	33.63	-3.82
PVC 4" Waste	20 ft	106.11	104.41	-1.60
Boxing Board	per ft	7.66	7.53	-1.70
Pitch Pine 2"x6" (dressed)	per ft	8.36	8.78	5.09
Primer (Trinity)	5 gal	271.06	282.93	4.38
Primer (Berger)	5 gal	316.86	323.49	2.09
Primer (Kaleidoscope)	5 gal	278.75	313.90	12.61
Oil Paint (Trinity Economy Gloss)	1 gal	114.72	113.85	-0.76
Oil Paint (Trinity Premium Gloss)	1 gal	136.99	140.72	2.73
Oil Paint (Berger 404 Gloss)	1 gal	159.15	169.84	6.72
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope 2000 Weatherproof)	1 gal	142.05	143.71	1.17
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope Supreme Gloss)	1 gal	110.33	118.85	7.73
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Economy Emulsion)	1 gal	54.71	56.33	2.97
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Weather Resistant)	1 gal	112.79	119.73	6.15
Emulsion Paint (Berger 303 Flat Emulsion)	1 gal	128.17	134.07	4.61
Kaleidoscope 2001 Premium Flat Emulsion	1 gal	114.60	117.84	2.83
Kaleidoscope Supreme Emulsion	1 gal	55.99	62.48	11.60

ITEM	UNIT	Oct to Dec 2009	Jan to Mar 2010	% Change
Ordinary Galvanize Nails	1 lb	10.76	11.18	3.87
PP Nails 2 ½"	1 lb	6.15	6.32	2.70
Concrete Nails	1 box 2"	15.63	15.54	-0.59
Aluzinc roofing sheet	per ft	12.33	12.57	1.95
Z purlin (4") 1.2mm	1 lgth 20'	114.30	118.06	3.29
Z purlin (4") 1.5mm	1 lgth 20'	162.42	159.52	-1.78
Z purlin (6")	1 lgth 20'	232.06	238.49	2.77
I beam (3")	1 lgth 20'	262.10	275.94	5.28
I beam (4")	1 lgth 20'	288.77	291.90	1.08
Hollow clay block 4x8x12	per block	5.38	5.42	0.75
Concrete block 6x8x16	per block	6.93	6.99	0.85
Concrete block 4x8x16	per block	5.58	5.61	0.54
Plywood 1/2" (groove) (treated)	1 sheet	235.18	237.08	0.81
MDF 1/2"	1 sheet	132.72	134.62	1.43
Gypsum 1/2"	1 sheet	82.86	81.53	-1.60
Gravel	1 load	2285.00	2178.00	-4.68
Plastering Sand	1 load	1024.48	1054.07	2.89

See **Appendix 1** for Table I which shows the maximum, minimum and average prices of hardware items in Trinidad in \$TT and Appendix 2 which highlights the hardware stores carrying the maximum and minimum prices in Trinidad.

5.0 FINDINGS

1. Cement

The survey showed that the price of cement increased in this quarter by 2.14% in Trinidad (Table 4.1). This increase may have been associated with an increase in retailers' overhead costs. In a media release¹ Trinidad Cement Ltd's CEO Dr Rollin Bertrand, said in light of falling building material prices, the company was looking to launch a cheaper line of cement on the market.

2. Steel

The findings of the survey showed that the average price of some steel products has decreased in Trinidad when compared to the fourth quarter of 2009. The steel items exhibiting a decrease include Steel Bars 5/8" (smooth), Steel Bars 1/2" (smooth), Steel Bars 3/8" (smooth), Concrete Nails and Z Purlin (4") 1.5mm.

Internationally, the price of steel has been decreasing steadily since the fourth quarter of 2008 as observed in Management Engineering & Production Services, MEPS international (*a leading independent supplier of steel market information*), World Carbon Steel Price forecasts for 2007-2008 (See Appendix 3).

In a media release², Caribbean Steel Mills stated that like many other manufacturing concerns in T&T, it has suffered the effects of the significant slow down in the economy. Firstly, the price of raw material, together with conversion costs to finished goods, exceeds the landed costs of imported finished goods. Secondly, sales have decreased by as much as 55 per cent.

3. Blocks

The Survey showed that the average price of building blocks for this quarter increased in Trinidad. The building blocks exhibiting an increase includes Hollow clay block 4x8x12 (0.75%), Concrete block 6x8x16 (0.85%) and Concrete block 4x8x16 (0.54%). The Sales Manager for ABEL Bestcrete, Nizam Rahim, in a telephone interview indicated that manufactures have not increased the prices of building blocks. However, due to the marginal increase in aggregate, retailers may have decided to pass on some of this increase in the price of blocks.

4. Aggregates

The Survey showed that in Trinidad the cost of Plastering Sand increased in this quarter by 2.89%, whereas Gravel decreased by 4.68%. The Sales Manager for ABEL Bestcrete, Nizam Rahim indicated that due to the increased rainfall, quarrying and the transportation of aggregate have become more difficult resulting in shortages which may have caused marginal increases in some aggregate products.

¹ Trinidad & Tobago Guardian 22 Feb 2009

² Trinidad & Tobago Guardian 30 Jun 2009

5. Paints

The survey showed that for the first quarter in 2010 the average price for paints has increased in Trinidad when compared to the fourth quarter of 2009. The increases were as follows:

- Primer (Trinity) 5 gal - 4.38%
- Primer (Berger) 5 gal - 2.09%
- Primer (Kaleidoscope) 5 gal - 12.61%
- Oil Paint (Trinity Premium Gloss) 1 gal - 2.73%
- Oil Paint (Berger 404 Gloss) 1 gal - 6.72%
- Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope 2000 Weatherproof) 1 gal - 1.17%
- Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope Supreme Gloss) 1 gal - 7.73%
- Emulsion Paint (Trinity Economy Emulsion) 1 gal - 2.97%
- Emulsion Paint (Trinity Weather Resistant) 1 gal - 6.15%
- Emulsion Paint (Berger 303 Flat Emulsion) 1 gal - 4.61%
- Kaleidoscope 2001 Premium Flat Emulsion 1 gal - 2.83%
- Kaleidoscope Supreme Emulsion 1 gal - 11.60%

The Sales Manager for Trinity Paints Ltd, Reshma Seepersadsingh indicated that the prices are being increased due to higher cost of operation mainly related to raw materials.

APPENDIX 1

Maximum, Minimum and Average Prices of Hardware items in Trinidad

ITEM	UNIT	MIN	MAX	AVERAGE
Cement	1 bag	46.00	56.10	48.94
Steel Bars 3/8"	1 lgth 20'	16.95	27.95	21.02
Steel Bars 1/2"	1 lgth 20'	25.00	36.95	29.83
Steel Bars 5/8"	1 lgth 20'	45.00	59.00	52.10
BRC 6x6x10g	per ft	3.90	10.50	6.16
Binding Wire	1 lb	5.95	10.75	8.05
PVC 1/2" Cold	20 ft	12.95	22.61	18.41
CPVC 1/2" Hot	20 ft	18.95	35.00	24.75
PVC 1 1/2" Waste	20 ft	25.00	60.00	33.63
PVC 4" Waste	20 ft	72.00	130.44	104.41
Boxing Board	per ft	5.95	10.32	7.53
Pitch Pine 2"x6" dressed	per ft	5.75	11.50	8.78
Primer (Trinity)	5 gal	247.83	395.00	282.93
Primer (Berger)	5 gal	250.00	434.79	323.49
Primer (Kaleidoscope)	5 gal	275.00	368.00	313.90
Oil Paint (Trinity Economy Gloss)	1 gal	102.00	130.00	113.85
Oil Paint (Trinity Premium Gloss)	1 gal	126.09	163.99	140.72
Oil Paint (Berger 404 Gloss)	1 gal	148.00	211.06	169.84
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope 2000 Weatherproof)	1 gal	134.78	161.00	143.71
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope Supreme Gloss)	1 gal	99.50	161.00	118.85
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Economy Emulsion)	1 gal	47.83	65.00	56.33
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Weather Resistant)	1 gal	100.00	160.00	119.73
Emulsion Paint (Berger 303 Flat Emulsion)	1 gal	120.00	147.25	134.07
Kaleidoscope 2001 Premium Flat Emulsion	1 gal	110.00	129.95	117.84
Kaleidoscope Supreme Emulsion	1 gal	49.57	74.75	62.48
Ordinary Galvanize Nails	1 lb	8.00	20.88	11.18
PP Nails 2 1/2"	1 lb	5.00	8.00	6.32
Concrete Nails	1 box 2"	11.50	20.00	15.54

ITEM	UNIT	MIN	MAX	AVERAGE
Aluzinc roofing sheet	per ft	9.50	20.13	12.57
Z purlin (4") 1.2mm	1 lgth 20'	98.90	169.95	118.06
Z purlin (4") 1.5mm	1 lgth 20'	120.00	234.78	159.52
Z purlin (6")	1 lgth 20'	190.00	295.00	238.49
I beam (3")	1 lgth 20'	204.00	369.57	275.94
I beam (4")	1 lgth 20'	240.35	413.04	291.90
Hollow clay block 4x8x12	per block	4.75	6.55	5.42
Concrete block 6x8x16	per block	4.95	8.50	6.99
Concrete block 4x8x16	per block	4.60	6.95	5.61
Plywood 1/2" groove	1 sheet	145.00	304.75	237.08
MDF 1/2"	1 sheet	110.00	172.50	134.62
Gypsum 1/2"	1 sheet	63.50	95.00	81.53
Gravel	1 load	1400.00	3195.00	2178.00
Plastering Sand	1 load	800.00	1454.00	1054.07

APPENDIX 2

Hardware Stores with the Minimum Prices and the Maximum Prices in Trinidad

ITEM	MAX	NAME OF HARDWARE(S) AND AREAS	MIN	NAME OF HARDWARE(S) AND AREAS
Cement	56.10	Nagib Elias-POS	46.00	M.N.R - AROUCA White Swan - ARIMA J.Chai - ARIMA
Steel Bars 3/8"	27.95	Diptee's - SIPARIA	16.95	J.Chai - ARIMA
Steel Bars 1/2"	36.95	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	25.00	M&D-DEBE
Steel Bars 5/8"	59.00	Northern - D/MARTIN	45.00	Bhagwansinghs-MARABELLA M&D - DEBE
BRC 6x6x10g	10.50	Northern - D/MARTIN	3.90	White Swan - ARIMA
Binding Wire	10.75	Nagib Elias - POS	5.95	Roopnarine's - CHAGUANAS
PVC 1/2" Cold	22.61	Budget - POINT FORTIN	12.95	5A Electrical - ARIMA
CPVC 1/2" Hot	35.00	Kamlall's - SAN JUAN	18.95	5A Electrical - ARIMA
PVC 1 1/2" Waste	60.00	H Lalla's - FYZABAD	25.00	M.N.R - AROUCA White Swan - ARIMA 5A Electrical - ARIMA Bhagwansinghs-MARABELLA
PVC 4" Waste	130.44	Budget-POINT FORTIN	72.00	J. Chai-ARIMA
Boxing Board	10.32	Nagib Elias-POS	5.95	Bhola's-FYZABAD
Pitch Pine 2"x6" dressed	11.50	R Dass & Son-S/GRANDE	5.75	Bhagwansinghs- MARABELLA
Primer (Trinity)	395.00	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	247.83	Budget-POINT FORTIN
Primer (Berger)	434.79	Budget-POINT FORTIN	250.00	Changoor's-DEBE
Primer (Kaleidoscope)	368.00	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	275.00	J. Chai-ARIMA
Oil Paint (Trinity Economy Gloss)	130.00	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	102.00	Bhola's-FYZABAD
Oil Paint (Trinity Premium Gloss)	163.99	CP's Plumbing-DUNCANVGE	126.09	Budget-POINT FORTIN
Oil Paint (Berger 404 Gloss)	211.06	Nagib Elias-POS	148.00	J. Chai-ARIMA
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope 2000 Weatherproof)	161.00	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	134.78	Budget-POINT FORTIN
Oil Paint (Kaleidoscope Supreme Gloss)	161.00	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	99.50	Diptee's-SIPARIA
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Economy Emulsion)	65.00	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	47.83	Budget-POINT FORTIN
Emulsion Paint (Trinity Weather Resistant)	160.00	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	100.00	Budget-POINT FORTIN

ITEM	MAX	NAME OF HARDWARE(S) AND AREAS	MIN	NAME OF HARDWARE(S) AND AREAS
Emulsion Paint (Berger 303 Flat Emulsion)	147.25	Northern Hard.-D/Martin	120.00	J. Chai-ARIMA Pt. Fortin Hard.-Pt. Fortin
Kaleidoscope 2001 Premium Flat Emulsion	129.95	Moosai's - TUNAPUNA	110.00	M&D H/ware-DEBE Diptee's-SIPARIA H Lalla's-FYZABAD Ramrattan-RIO CLARO
Kaleidoscope Supreme Emulsion	74.75	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	49.57	Budget-POINT FORTIN
Ordinary Galvanize Nails	20.88	Nagib Elias-POS	8.00	Payless H/ware-D/MARTIN M.N.R-AROUCA J. Chai- ARIMA
PP Nails 2 ½ "	8.00	Harrinanan-S/GRANDE Kamlall's-EL SOCORRO	5.00	Payless H/ware-D/MARTIN Pt Fortin H/ware-P/FORTIN
Concrete Nails	20.00	Roopnarine-CHAGUANAS Kamlall's-EL SOCORRO	11.50	Bhagwansinghs-MARABELLA
Aluzinc roofing sheet	20.13	Nagib Elias-POS	9.50	Bhagwansinghs-MARABELLA
Z purlin (4") 1.2mm	169.95	Diptee's-SIPARIA	98.90	Chotoo's-SAN JUAN
Z purlin (4") 1.5mm	234.78	Budget- POINT FORTIN	120.00	Harrinanan-S/GRANDE
Z purlin (6")	295.00	Roopnarine-CHAGUANAS	190.00	J. Chai-ARIMA
I beam (3")	369.57	Budget-P/FORTIN	204.00	Yee Ken-ARIMA
I beam (4")	413.04	Budget-P/FORTIN	240.35	Yee Ken-ARIMA
Hollow clay block 4x8x12	6.55	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	4.75	Ramrattan-RIO CLARO
Concrete block 6x8x16	8.50	Moosai's-TUNAPUNA	4.95	J. Chai-ARIMA
Concrete block 4x8x16	6.95	P/Fortin Hardware-POINT FORTIN	4.60	White Swan-ARIMA
Plywood 1/2" groove	304.75	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	145.00	J.Chai-ARIMA
MDF 1/2"	172.50	K. Mohammed-CARENAGE	110.00	Roopnarine-CHAGUANAS M.N.R-AROUCA
Gypsum 1/2"	95.00	Pt Fortin H/ware-P/FORTIN Bhola's-FYZABAD	63.50	Northern H/ware-D/MARTIN
Gravel	3195.00	Nagib Elias-POS	1400.00	White Swan-ARIMA
Plastering Sand	1454.00	Northern H/ware-D/MARTIN	800.00	Kamlall's -SAN JUAN J. Chai - ARIMA

APPENDIX 3

MEPS – WORLD CARBON STEEL PRICE INDEX – WITH INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT FORECASTS (Based on US \$/tonne values)

Month	Hot Rolled Coil	Hot Rolled Plate	Cold Rolled Coil	HD Galv. Coil	Electro Zinc Coil	Wire Rod (mesh)	Structural Sections & Beams	Rebar	Merchant Bar
Jun-07	173.6	203.6	144.4	151.0	139.2	194.2	189.3	202.3	194.9
Jul-07	170.2	205.6	143.4	147.6	138.5	190.3	190.9	193.8	192.8
Aug-07	171.3	207.1	144.4	148.8	139.5	191.6	192.3	195.4	194.0
Sep-07	171.0	206.1	141.7	146.7	138.5	187.1	191.4	193.1	195.5
Oct-07	173.6	210.2	143.2	146.6	137.5	188.4	196.7	195.1	200.0
Nov-07	174.7	212.0	144.8	148.6	138.8	188.4	198.8	193.8	202.4
Dec-07	179.0	213.0	148.4	150.0	141.2	192.9	200.2	196.4	203.3
Jan-08	181.5	215.5	150.7	151.7	140.0	200.3	203.0	206.9	207.5
Feb-08	198.6	225.7	162.5	158.6	140.7	221.6	211.0	230.2	223.6
Mar-08	227.3	248.9	187.4	177.4	161.5	244.5	226.1	249.5	244.2
Apr-08	259.9	271.0	207.4	194.8	179.3	274.8	242.9	285.6	280.0
May-08	283.5	295.2	227.4	207.2	192.4	296.8	257.6	307.5	297.9
Jun-08	304.8	311.7	240.8	219.8	201.7	324.2	276.0	333.1	319.4
Jul-08	312.2	332.6	249.7	226.0	208.1	344.2	287.6	350.2	332.2
Aug-08	310.5	330.8	248.2	224.8	207.1	342.6	286.0	347.9	330.1
Sep-08	276.4	316.3	220.2	202.4	191.9	315.2	269	299.7	300.3
Oct-08	245.7	292.6	197.9	186.0	182.9	261.6	243.6	240.7	267.5
Nov-08	203.4	254.5	168.8	161.7	153.9	218.1	209.3	188.9	234.3
Dec-08	160.5	229.3	138.7	138.1	131.4	196.5	181.8	193.4	216.7
Jan-09	163.4	205.1	140.2	136.7	131.7	201.9	184.4	195.4	224.8
Feb-09	158.0	183.0	134.1	129.3	124.1	185.2	175.5	176.7	212.8
Mar-09	143.5	163.6	125.1	120.2	115.1	169.7	166.4	157.7	185.7
Apr-09	138.4	162.3	121.3	116.6	114.7	161.3	158.0	159.0	186.0
May-09	134.7	153.9	117.1	114.7	109.2	158.1	161.3	163.9	190.7
Jun-09	140.6	153.7	121.9	117.9	112.9	163.9	163.4	163.9	193.7
Jul-09	145.7	153.7	125.9	120.3	111.9	166.1	159.0	166.6	192.2
Aug-09	154.5	158.3	133.9	126.4	117.6	170.0	162.5	171.1	196.4
Sep-09	167.6	163.1	143.2	136.6	129.2	176.5	164.6	176.7	196.7
Oct-09	168.2	166.7	145.7	137.8	134.9	177.7	162.9	176.7	195.2
Nov-09	163.4	163.6	141.9	133.1	131.9	173.5	157.8	167.2	190.7
Dec-09	164.5	162.6	143.4	134.5	132.7	179.0	161.1	172.8	190.7
Jan-10	172.4	163.4	147.4	136.7	134.6	183.5	163.2	181.0	195.8

Source - <http://www.meps.co.uk/World%20Price%20Index.htm> (May 2010)

MEPS – WORLD CARBON STEEL PRICES

