

Legal requirements for meat establishments

Descriptions of the legal requirements from each regulation that applies to meat establishments.

Basic Requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations 852/2004

All Premises

Clean premises in good repair.

Size, layout, design, construction and siting must:

- allow maintenance, cleaning, and/or disinfection
- avoid or minimise air borne contamination
- provide adequate working space
- protect against accumulation of dirt, shedding of particles into food and formation of condensation or 'undesirable' mould
- permit good hygiene practices – particular reference to pest control
- where necessary, provide suitable temp - controlled handling conditions of sufficient capacity designed to allow temps to be monitored and, where necessary, recorded
- have mechanical systems must be readily accessible
- provide airflow from a contaminated area to a clean area to be avoided
- provide adequate natural or artificial lighting

Changing, toilet and washing facilities must include:

- adequate number of flush lavatories connected to effective drainage system - lavatories must not open directly into food rooms
- adequate number of wash hand basins suitably located - hot and cold running water, cleaning materials and material for hygienic drying of hands
- sufficient and suitable means of natural or mechanical ventilation
- sanitary conveniences to be ventilated (natural or mechanical)
- drainage facilities to be adequate for purpose, designed and constructed to avoid risk of contamination
- drainage must ensure that waste does not flow from a contaminated to a clean area
- adequate changing facilities
- separate storage for cleaning agents/disinfectants from food handling areas

Food preparation areas

Design and layout must permit Good Hygiene Practices and protection against contamination.

Floor surfaces must be sound and easy to clean - must use impervious, non-absorbent, washable, non-toxic materials. Where appropriate, adequate surface drainage necessary.

Sound walls, easy to clean and disinfect - smooth surface to appropriate height using impervious, non-absorbent, washable and non-toxic materials.

Ceilings and overhead fixtures or interior of roof to be constructed and finished to prevent accumulation of:

- dirt
- reduce condensation
- growth of undesirable mould
- particle shedding

Windows and other openings to be constructed to prevent accumulation of dirt. Windows opening to exterior fitted with screens which can be removed for cleaning.

Easily cleaned doors – smooth, non-absorbent surfaces.

Surfaces and equipment in contact with food to be maintained in sound condition and be easy to clean.

Adequate facilities for cleaning, disinfecting and storage of tools and equipment.

Facilities to be constructed of corrosion-resistant materials, be easy to clean, and have adequate hot and cold water supply.

Equipment requirements

All articles, fittings and equipment contacting food must:

- be effectively cleaned and, where necessary, disinfected - such cleansing and disinfection to take place at a frequency sufficient to avoid risk of contamination
- be so constructed of such materials and be kept in such good order, repair and condition as to minimise any risk of contamination
- with the exception of non-returnable containers and packaging – be so constructed, be of such materials and be kept in such good order – as to enable them to be kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected
- be installed in such a manner as to allow adequate cleaning of the equipment and the surrounding area

Requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations 853/2004

Meat from domestic ungulates (red meat) and meat of farmed game

Food business operators must ensure that the construction, layout and equipment of slaughterhouses in which domestic ungulates are slaughtered meet the requirements.

Slaughterhouses must have adequate and hygienic lairage facilities or, climate permitting, waiting pens that are easy to clean and disinfect. Equipment must include watering and, if necessary, feeding facilities.

Drainage of waste water must not compromise food safety.

They must have separate lockable facilities or, climate permitting, pens for sick or suspect animals with separate drainage.

They must also be sited to avoid contamination of other animals unless the competent authority considers such facilities unnecessary.

Size of lairage must ensure welfare is respected. Layout must facilitate ante-mortem inspections, including identification of animals or groups of animals.

To avoid contaminating meat, slaughterhouses must have a sufficient number of rooms appropriate to operations being carried out.

They must also have a separate room for emptying and cleaning stomachs and intestines. This is the case unless the competent authority authorises time separation of these operations in a specific slaughterhouse on a case-by-case basis.

Slaughterhouses need to ensure separation in space or time of:

- stunning and bleeding
- in the case of pigs – scalding, depilation, scraping and singeing
- evisceration and further dressing
- handling clean guts and tripe
- preparation and cleaning of other offal, particularly the handling of skinned heads if it does not take place at the slaughterline
- offal packing
- dispatching meat
- have installations that prevent contact between the meat and the floors, walls and fixtures
- have lines (where operated) that are designed to allow constant progress of the process and to avoid cross-contamination between different parts of the line

Where more than one line is operated in the same premises, there must be adequate separation of the lines to prevent cross-contamination.

They must have facilities for disinfecting tools with hot water at no less than 82°C or have an alternative system having equivalent effect.

Equipment for hand washing by staff handling exposed meat must have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination.

There must be lockable facilities for the refrigerated storage of detained meat and separate closable, lockable and cleanable facilities for storage of unfit meat.

There must be a separate place with appropriate facilities for cleaning, washing and disinfection of livestock vehicles. Slaughterhouses need not have these places and facilities if the Competent Authority so permits, and official authorised places and facilities exist nearby.

They must have lockable casualty slaughter facilities unless this slaughter takes place elsewhere in either:

- other establishments authorised by the Competent Authority
- at the end of the normal slaughter period

If manure or digestive tract contents are stored, there must be a special place or area for that.

They must have an adequately equipped lockable facility or, where needed, a room for the exclusive use of the veterinary service.

Meat from poultry and lagomorphs (white meat) and Meat of Farmed Game (birds)

Slaughterhouses must have a room or covered space to the reception of the animals and for their inspection before slaughter.

To avoid contaminating meat, they must ensure that separation occurs in space or time of the following operations:

- stunning and bleeding
- plucking or skinning, and any scalding
- dispatching meat

Contamination must also be avoided by having:

- a sufficient number of rooms, appropriate to the operations being carried out
- a separate room for evisceration and further dressing, including the addition of seasonings to whole poultry carcasses - unless the Competent Authority authorises separation in time of these operations within a specific slaughterhouse on a case-by-case basis
- installations that prevent contact between the meat and the floors, walls and fixtures
- have slaughterlines that are designed to allow a constant progress of the process

Where more than one line is operated in the premises, there must be adequate separation of the lines to avoid cross contamination.

They must have facilities for disinfecting tools with hot water at no less than 82°C or an alternative system having equivalent effect.

Equipment for hand washing by staff handling exposed meat must have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination.

There must be lockable facilities for the refrigerated storage of detained meat and separate closable, lockable and cleanable facilities for the storage of unfit meat.

There must be a separate place with appropriate facilities for the cleaning, washing and disinfection of:

- transport equipment such as crates
- livestock vehicles

These places and facilities are not compulsory for livestock vehicles if officially authorised places and facilities exist nearby.

They must have an adequately equipped lockable facility or, where needed, room for the exclusive use of the veterinary service.

Requirements under the Food Hygiene (additional to Regulations 852/2004)

Cutting Premises - Meat from domestic ungulates (red meat), meat of farmed game and wild game meat

Plants are constructed to avoid contamination of meat by either:

- allowing constant progress of operations
- ensuring separation between the different production batches

Have separate rooms for storage of packaged and exposed meat. This is unless stored at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage cannot be a source of contamination.

Have cutting rooms equipped to ensure compliance with Annex III, Section I, Chapter V. For example, work on meat must be organised to prevent or minimise contamination. In particular, operators must ensure that:

- meat intended for cutting is brought into workrooms progressively as needed
- during cutting, boning, trimming, slicing, dicing, wrapping and packaging, the meat is maintained at not more than 3°C for offal and 7°C for other meat by means of an ambient temp of not more than 12°C or an alternative system having an equivalent effect
- where premises are approved for cutting meat of different species, precautions are taken to avoid cross contamination by separation of the operations on the different species in either space or time

Have wash hand basins with taps designed to prevent spread contamination for staff handling exposed meat.

Have hot water sterilisers operating at not less than 82°C or an alternative system having an equivalent effect.

Meat from poultry and lagomorphs (white meat), meat of farmed game and wild game meat

Plants are constructed to avoid contamination of meat by either:

- allowing constant progress of operators
- ensuring separation between the different production batches

Have separate rooms for storage of packaged and exposed meat. This is unless stored at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage cannot be a source of contamination.

Have cutting rooms equipped to ensure compliance with the requirements laid down in Annex III, Section II, Chapter V of 853. For example, work on meat must be organised to prevent or minimise contamination. In particular, operators must ensure that:

- meat intended for cutting is brought into the workrooms progressively as needed
- during cutting, boning, trimming, slicing, dicing, wrapping and packaging, the meat is maintained at not more than 4°C by means of an ambient temp of not more than 12°C or an alternative system having an equivalent effect
- where premises are approved for the cutting of different animal species, precautions are taken to avoid cross-contamination, where necessary by separation of the operations on the different species in either space or time

Meat may be boned and cut prior to reaching 4°C when slaughterhouse and cutting premises are on the same site providing it is transferred to the cutting room either:

- directly from the slaughter premises
- after a period in a chiller

In such cases meat must be chilled to 4°C as soon as it is cut and where appropriate packaged.

Exposed meat must be stored and transported separately from packaged meat. This is unless stored or transported at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage or transport cannot be a source of contamination.

Have wash hand basins used by staff handling exposed meat with taps designed to prevent spread of contamination.

Have hot water sterilisers operating at not less than 82°C or an equivalent system having an equivalent effect.

If delayed evisceration or evisceration of 'foie gras' geese or ducks stunned, bled and plucked on farm takes place. The cutting premises must have separate rooms which are available for that purpose.