Animal welfare

We maintain regular checks on slaughterhouses in the UK, to ensure that they comply with our regulations that maintain animal welfare.

Under Council Regulation 1099/2009 responsibility for animal welfare and food safety in slaughterhouses rests with business operators. You must meet legislative requirements in terms of slaughterhouse design, layout and equipment.

Your slaughterers must be appropriately trained and licensed to slaughter all species presented to them.

You are responsible for ensuring animal needs are met and for the welfare of animals in your care.

Specially trained Official Veterinarians carry out checks to make sure that there have been no issues concerning the welfare of animals presented for slaughter.

This can happen

- when the animals are on the farm
- during transport
- when the animals arrive at the slaughterhouse
- up to the point of slaughter

These checks include making sure that the business operator has appropriate procedures in place to safeguard animal welfare. Meat hygiene inspectors support them with these duties.

So that the risk of any animal suffering during the process is minimised, our operational staff check:

- the unloading and handling of animals
- where they are kept prior to slaughter
- the restraint and handling of animals
- the positioning of stunning equipment
- the effectiveness of the stun the efficiency of bleeding

This includes monitoring of slaughter by religious methods including special restraint facilities that may be in place for this purpose.

More information can be found on gov.uk pages on animal welfare.

Monitoring slaughterhouses in England and Wales

We monitor slaughterhouses to make sure that animals are protected before and during slaughter and killing.

We issue certificates of competence for slaughterers and other operatives working with animals such as handlers or shacklers.

This is to make sure you have the right training and for the animals you are handling and the
duties you are carrying out.

The legislation that we use is the Council Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. England and Wales have also retained national rules where these give greater protection to animals at the time of killing than the EU Regulation.

We enforce legislation for animal welfare at slaughter. This is done with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 SI 1782

We work with the Welsh government to enforce animal welfare legislation in Wales.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014 SSI 951

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs enforces animal welfare legislation for animal welfare in Northern Ireland.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2014

**Mandatory use of CCTV in slaughterhouses**

Regulations on mandatory use of CCTV in slaughterhouses in England came into force in May 2018. As a business operator you must:

- install CCTV equipment in your slaughterhouse
- keep CCTV images for 90 days
- make the images available to our inspectors

**Transition period**

There's a 6-month transition period. You must install and operate a CCTV system that complies with the CCTV regulations by 5 November 2018.

**Guidance**

Guidance for business operators on how to comply with the CCTV regulations

**Regulations details**

CCTV equipment must provide a complete and clear view of killing and related operations in all areas of the slaughterhouse where live animals are present, such as areas where they are unloaded, kept, handled, stunned and killed, up to the point where the assessment for absence of life is carried out.

Picture resolution should be sufficient for individuals and operations to be identified. The frame rate should record continuous motion.

All currently installed CCTV equipment must meet the same requirements of the regulations as
newly installed equipment.

You must retain CCTV recordings for a minimum of 90 days.

**New slaughterhouses**

From 4 May 2018 new slaughterhouses must meet all requirements of the regulations. You will be assessed during your application for approval to operate.

**Access to the CCTV equipment and footage**

You must give access to your CCTV facilities and footage to our inspectors so they can provide effective monitoring and verify animal welfare standards. CCTV will be used as an additional tool, it does not replace direct practical official observations.

There is no legal requirement for you or your representatives to be present when footage is reviewed. You may decide, for your own reassurance, to have a staff member present when footage is viewed or copied, or equipment seized.

**Enforcement**

Our inspectors may issue an enforcement notice if you’re in breach of the CCTV regulations.

You commit an offence if you:

- do not have CCTV that complies with the CCTV regulations
- do not retain images for 90 days from the date taken
- do not make CCTV images available to inspectors to view, copy or seize
- do not comply with an enforcement notice

**Data protection**

As a business operator, you are the data controller and will need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

If our inspectors copy or seize CCTV footage, the FSA will become a data controller for that portion of footage and will also need to comply with GDPR requirements. The footage will be returned to you as soon as is practicable when it is decided it is no longer required for investigations or court proceedings.

**All animal welfare survey results**

Each year we carry out a survey on CCTV in slaughterhouses in England and Wales.

Results of animal welfare surveys carried out by us in 2011, 2013 and 2015 in slaughterhouses are also available in the [national archives](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cctv-in-slaughterhouses).

**Requirements for non-stun slaughter**

If you don’t slaughter your animals with prior stunning, DEFRA has recently clarified requirements for non-stun slaughter of small ruminant animals by religious rites.

[Requirements for non-stun slaughter of small ruminant animals by religious rites](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/requirements-for-non-stun-slaughter-of-small-ruminant-animals-by-religious-rites) (29.25 KB)
**Training**

Individuals that are involved in killing and related operations must hold a proficiency qualification before being able to apply for a Certificate of Competence.

You do not need a proficiency qualification if you have grandfather rights and meet application criteria that is included in the slaughter licensing information.

_Food and Drink Qualification (FDQ) and Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) approve food businesses and learning providers to deliver and assess proficiency qualifications. They can provide further information for your staff to complete the required qualification._

**Our checks**

Specially trained Official Veterinarians carry out checks to make sure that there have been no issues concerning the welfare of animals presented for slaughter.

These checks include making sure that the business operator has appropriate procedures in place to safeguard animal welfare. Meat Hygiene Inspectors support them with these duties.

Our operational staff monitor the slaughter process to ensure that welfare at slaughter is maintained to the highest standards.

Checks are made:

- on the unloading and handling of animals
- where they are kept prior to slaughter
- restraining of animals
- positioning of stunning equipment
- on the effectiveness of the stun
- the efficiency of bleeding

These checks minimise the risk of any animal suffering during the process.

This includes monitoring of slaughter by religious methods including special restraint facilities that may be in place for this purpose.

**Reports of our checks**

Our reports show number of welfare non-compliances in England and Wales by species in each area of slaughterhouses including:

- unloading
- lairage
- movement and restraint
- stunning
- bleeding
- management responsibilities

Management responsibilities cover areas the business operator is responsible for such as keeping up-to-date Standard Operating Procedures.
The data also shows numbers of non-compliant premises, numbers of affected animals and types of enforcement actions taken.

The four most recent quarters are available below. Previous reports are available on our [Food Data website](#).

**England and Wales**

- Animal Welfare non-compliances Q1 2018/19 (594.41 KB)
- Animal Welfare non-compliances Q2 2018/19 (621.11 KB)
- Animal Welfare non-compliances Q3 2018/19 (385.73 KB)
- Animal Welfare non-compliances Q4 2018/19 (382.21 KB)

**National survey**

We carried out a week long animal welfare surveys in slaughterhouses in Britain in 2011 and 2013 to provide assurance that:

- food business operators were taking active steps to comply with legal requirements and achieve necessary animal welfare standards
- Official Veterinarians and frontline teams were carrying out their roles effectively, with appropriate monitoring and relevant enforcement action being taken in the event of food business operator non-compliance
- an unannounced inspection programme also took place in February to March 2015, with results presented to the our Board in June 2015

[Farm animals: data from survey of slaughter methods 2015](#)