

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - food hygiene regulations

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under food hygiene regulations.

Food hygiene regulations

[Regulation \(EC\) No 853/2004](#) (hereinafter Food Hygiene Regulation) indicates that in most cases, meat intended for human consumption must originate from animals slaughtered in approved slaughterhouses. Such slaughter is, amongst other things, subject to inspection and verification by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The legality of slaughter outside approved premises depends on whether it is intended that the carcase or meat from the carcase will be 'placed on the market'. [Article 3 of Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) defines 'placing on the market' as "the holding of food or feed for the purpose of sale, including offering for sale or any other form of transfer, whether free of charge or not, and the sale, distribution and other forms of transfer themselves". For example, the supply of a carcase back to the owner by an approved slaughterhouse amounts to placing on the market under this definition because:

- There is supply of food in the course of a business; and
- Supply occurs, because the product returned after slaughter (i.e. the dressed carcase or meat) is fundamentally different in kind to what was delivered to the slaughterhouse (i.e. the live animal).

Therefore, for home slaughter to be legal and exempt from the Food Hygiene Regulation, the owner must only supply members of their immediate family who share the same household. Carcasses or parts of carcasses from home slaughter livestock, other than those being disposed of as animal by-products (ABPs), cannot be moved to another premises for processing. It is illegal under the [Food Safety and Hygiene \(England\) Regulations 2013](#), [the Food Hygiene \(Wales\) Regulations 2006](#) and [The General Food Regulations 2004](#) for the owner to supply others, for example, give to friends or to family that do not live in the same household, or if the meat is sold via an on-farm shop or farmers markets.

Meat from home slaughtered animals placed on the market is illegal and may therefore be seized and destroyed. Local Authority (LA) officers may certify that meat has not been produced, processed or distributed in accordance with those Regulations mentioned above. Such meat would then be treated as failing to comply with food safety requirements under [section 9 of the Food Safety Act 1990](#). An order for its condemnation could be obtained from a Magistrates' Court. In carrying out this enforcement role, LAs may on occasion need to liaise with the FSA. A list of contact points is in [Annex A](#).