

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

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under animal welfare regulations.

Animal welfare regulations

Legislation is in place to safeguard the welfare of livestock animals during slaughter. [\(footnote 1\)](#) Slaughter must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of [Council Regulation \(EC\) No. 1099/2009 on the Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing](#) (hereinafter the PATOK Regulation), the [Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations \(England\) 2015 \(PDF\)](#) and the [Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(Wales\) Regulations 2014 \(PDF\)](#) (hereinafter referred to as the WATOK Regulations).

Under the PATOK and WATOK Regulations, when animals are slaughtered, they must be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during the process. Home slaughtered animals may only be slaughtered after stunning in accordance with the requirements laid down in [Article 10 of the PATOK Regulation](#) and Schedule 2 of the WATOK Regulations. The loss of consciousness and sensibility shall be maintained until the death of the animal. Slaughter of animals by methods prescribed by religious rites without prior stunning is only permitted in approved slaughterhouses, in accordance with Schedule 3 of the WATOK Regulations.

Under the PATOK Regulation, [Article 7\(1\)](#) states that "killing and related operations shall only be carried out by persons with the appropriate level of competence to do so without causing the animals any avoidable pain, distress or suffering".

The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) publishes guidance and provides training for on-farm slaughter of livestock and provides detailed information on legislation and best practice for livestock owners on humane slaughtering. Several resources can be accessed on the [HSA website](#).

Outside approved premises (e.g. home slaughter), the [PATOK Regulation](#) is enforced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) with the support of the Local Authority (LA). A LA may appoint inspectors for the purpose of enforcing the PATOK Regulation and the WATOK Regulations in establishments other than slaughterhouses. An inspector may, on giving reasonable notice (this is not always required), enter any premises at a reasonable hour for the purpose of executing or enforcing the Regulations; in this context "premises" includes any land, building, shed, pen, receptacle or vehicle of any description.

Any evidence of failure to comply with the relevant legislation, as detailed in this guidance, may be investigated and appropriate enforcement action taken. Should there be any doubt that the required welfare conditions to allow the legal home slaughter of livestock cannot be met, the animal/s must be slaughtered at an approved slaughterhouse where meat will be subjected to formal inspection procedures to verify that it is fit for human consumption. Details of the locations of approved slaughterhouses can be found at [Approved Food Establishments in England and](#)

[Wales](#), and in [Annex A](#).

1. For further information, please go to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare>