



Temporary Operational Instruction

Action note: 2026-05-11- Chapter 2.3 of the Manual for Official Controls (MOC) - Changes to Animal Welfare Severity descriptions, and new Chronos fields

Purpose

This action note is to inform operational staff of a new temporary operational instruction relating to:

- Amendments to the Animal Welfare Severity descriptions
- Changes to Chronos
 - Addition of an Intent field for Animal Welfare Enforcement cases
 - Addition of an Urgency field for Animal Welfare Farm / Transport cases.

Background

These changes are required following discussions with APHA for farm and transport cases, and the FSA Board for slaughterhouse Animal Welfare enforcement cases.

In recent months the FSA Animal Welfare team have led a small working group refining and testing the required changes. The project has now concluded and the following Chronos changes will come into effect from 13 May 2026. The MOC will be updated at the next available amendment.

Procedure

To enable identification of harm, severity descriptions (MOC Chapter 2.3, Section 3.4.3, and in Chronos) are amended as set out below:

Severity	Description
1. Welfare Compliant	<p>Compliant with welfare regulations</p> <p>The BO is operating fully in compliance with the regulations and their own welfare controls and SOPs.</p>
2. Low Severity	<p>Low risk to Animal Welfare or technical breach</p> <p>Welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with legislative requirements.</p> <p>A situation where no pain, distress or suffering has occurred and the likelihood that it will occur remains low if the infringement is not rectified.</p> <p>There was a technical infringement that does not impact on the welfare of animals.</p>
3. Medium Severity	<p>Potential risk to Animal Welfare</p>

	<p>Welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with legislative requirements.</p> <p>A situation where no pain, distress or suffering has occurred, but the likelihood that it will occur if the infringement is not rectified is higher than low (or is imminent).</p> <p>The welfare of animals during transportation was suspected to be compromised.</p>
4. High Severity	<p>Harm caused</p> <p>Welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with legislative requirements.</p> <p>Pain, distress, or suffering has occurred, whether intentional or unintentional.</p> <p>These cases are likely to require written advice as a minimum.</p> <p>The welfare of animals during transportation was seriously compromised with evidence of animals suffering pain, distress or suffering.</p> <p>DOAs and female red meat animals transported in the last 10% of pregnancy always require a 4 score and must be referred to the LA.</p>

In Chronos, where a severity 4 score (high, harm caused) is selected for incidents occurring during killing and related operations, you will be required to state the perceived level of intent, as set out below:

Intent	Description	Examples
1. Accident	<p>Harm was unforeseeable, precautions were in place, and harm could not reasonably have been avoided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No intent to cause harm No sign of risk Harm was not reasonably foreseeable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment failure due to an unexpected mechanical fault, despite being serviced, maintained, and checked Animal slips on a clean, dry floor, where flooring and handling are fully compliant

<p>2. Careless</p>	<p>A failure to take proper care allowed a risk to occur or go unaddressed leading to unintentional harm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lapse in attention • No intent to cause harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacking crates in an unstable way • Failing to ensure a gate latch was properly engaged but it was not deliberately ignored
<p>3. Reckless</p>	<p>Behaviour resulting in harm that exceeds carelessness, where the risk is ignored, demonstrating a disregard for the potential consequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No intent to cause harm • Person knows (or should know) harm is probable • Behaviour exceeds carelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a race with a known minor defect and failing to report it • Driving forklifts too fast in a live animal area • Failing to properly maintain equipment • Driving animals aggressively with excessive shouting or overuse of paddles
<p>4. Deliberate</p>	<p>Intentionally causing harm, or repeated careless or reckless actions demonstrate a concerning and persistent behavioural pattern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear intent to cause harm or suffering • Actions cannot be (or can no longer be) explained as careless or reckless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kicking or striking animals to intentionally harm them • Throwing live bird crates • Deliberately applying electric goads to sensitive areas • Purposeful failure to provide feed / water • Intentionally mishandling animals to vent frustration

This table will be incorporated into Section 3.4 of the MOC.

To support categorisation and notification to APHA and Local Authorities, new urgency descriptions are being introduced and must be selected in Chronos, as set out below:

Urgency	Description
<p>2. Accident</p>	<p>Situations where an animal’s condition, including injury or death, is the result of an accident that could not reasonably have been avoided, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • injuries resulting from emergency stopping during transport, or • road traffic accidents involving livestock vehicles

	<p>No Annex 4 referral or immediate contact with the LA or APHA is required for these situations. This does not include DOA, which must be reported / referred. Contact with the LA or APHA should be attempted, when convenient, to provide information.</p>
<p>3. Non-urgent</p>	<p>Situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no suspicion of risk to animals on the farm of origin, or • there is a minor welfare concern to animals on the farm of origin that may require a non-urgent LA/APHA visit, or • the animal’s condition was present on farm and minor and not compromised during transport, or • the incident cannot be attributed to the actions or omissions of an individual (an example would be poultry trappings) <p>Safeguard the welfare of the animals. Gather evidence as you would for an urgent breach. Submit an Annex 4 referral to APHA One Health by 17:00 on the next working day following identification of the incident. Immediate contact with LA or APHA is not required but should be attempted when convenient to provide information</p>
<p>4. Urgent</p>	<p>Situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is immediate risk to animals at the farm of origin, requiring prompt LA/APHA intervention, or • the incident can be attributed to the action or failure to act by an individual during rearing, keeping, or transporting and has caused suffering <p>Safeguard the welfare of the animals. Gather robust evidence. Make immediate contact with the LA or APHA to support prompt investigation. Submit the Annex 4 referral to APHA One Health by 17:00 on the same working day that the incident is identified</p>

This table will be incorporated into Section 3.3 of the MOC.

The Chronos changes will come into effect from 13th May 2026. The MOC will be updated at the next available amendment.

Front line staff are required to note the following action

Note the contents of the action note carefully and ensure you fully understand the content.

Distribution

This action note will be:

- uploaded to the [Temporary Operational Instruction Folder held in the MOC area of SharePoint](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- logged on the [Temporary Operational Instruction tracker](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- published alongside the [MOC chapters on food.gov.uk](#)

The action note will remain live until either incorporated into the MOC or revoked.

Annex

Action note drafted by and date	Action note agreed by and date	Published and date
DG 30/04/2026	RPM 30/04/2026	11/05/2026