

Section 12 - Abattoir Standards

These standards apply to animals slaughtered for human consumption. They cover the handling of live animals from arrival through the slaughter and dressing to chill. Cutting and packing operations are covered by the general processing standards.

12.1 General

12.1.1 Section 8 of the Standards also applies to abattoirs.

12.2 Records

1.2.2.1 The following records must be kept:

1. Species, number and identification of the animals arriving and the supplier.
2. The organic status by means of the Organic Livestock to Slaughter document, Organic Sector Livestock Transfer Document or Delivery note confirming the number and organic status.
3. The confirmation that the organic status has been checked.
4. A copy of the current Certificate/Trading Schedule for each supplier, confirming their certification for the species.
5. Feed records - Details of any organic feed supplied to the stock if held overnight.
6. Processing records – Kill number, kill date and weight of each carcass.
7. Goods out – Details of consignments dispatched, organic status, quantity and destination, by means of an invoice or delivery note.
8. Maintenance records – records of maintenance and testing done on stunning and killing equipment.
9. Cleaning records – cleaning schedules and the daily records confirming that they have been adhered to.
10. Pest control records – Details of any contractor used, in house operations, materials, bait plans etc.
11. Training records for each member of staff.
12. Up to date lists of MHS licensed slaughterers who work at the abattoir, including the full or provisional license, species and equipment.
13. Complaints register – Details of any complaints received against the welfare of the animals or the end products, the corrective actions taken and when.

12.3 Animal Welfare

12.3.1 There must be a nominated person responsible for animal welfare, with the training and competence to take appropriate actions to ensure welfare.

12.3.2 The arrival of animals must be planned to ensure that they can be unloaded as soon as they arrive.

12.3.3 Where there is an unavoidable delay in unloading, the animals must have shade, shelter, ventilation and drinking water and their welfare must be supervised.

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12.3.4 There must be a suitably trained and competent member of staff to oversee the unloading of every animal, including those delivered out of hours.

12.3.5 The unloading facilities must be suitable for the purpose with suitable tailboard inclines and side gates, non-slip floors, no distractions and no immediate right-angled turns.

12.4 Lairage

12.4.1 Pens must be labelled to show that the animals are organic.

12.4.2 Animals must be able to see other animals and fractious or horned animals be kept apart to prevent injury.

12.4.3 Organic and non-organic animals must not be mixed in the same pen.

12.4.4 Animals from different loads must not be mixed unless they are from the same social groups from the same source.

12.4.5 Animals should not be kept on their own unless unavoidable.

12.4.6 Animals must be given access to clean water and comfortable conditions on arrival unless slaughtered immediately. Water and clean bedding must be available if they have to wait for slaughter more than 6 hours and organic feed if more than 12 hours (if they are delivered the evening before for slaughter first the following morning). The feed should be supplied by the producer.

12.4.7 During lairage, the animals must be regularly checked. Where water sprays are used for pigs, the temperature must be recorded.

12.4.8 Undue force and electric goads are not permitted when moving animals.

12.5 Stunning and slaughtering

12.5.1 Live animals must not be able to see the stunning and slaughtering process.

12.5.2 Animals must be restrained only for stunning and without causing injury, pain or distress.

12.5.3 Animals must not be killed without pre-stunning. The stunning process must cause instantaneous unconsciousness or induce unconsciousness without distress and maintain this until death. With the exception of poultry, the animals must be unconscious before shackling and hoisting.

12.5.4 There must be adequate manual back up or reserve equipment available at the point of slaughter in case of emergency or breakdown.

12.5.5 For the stunning and killing equipment, there must be an effective cleaning and maintenance schedule, based on the manufacturers instructions and operated by suitably trained and competent staff.

12.5.6 The following methods of stunning or killing are permitted:

Method	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry	Deer
Penetrative captive bolt	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted only in emergency		Permitted

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			or as backup		
Electrocution	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted		
Free bullet	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Not permitted	Permitted
Electronarcosis		Permitted	Permitted	Permitted using dry electrodes or water bath stunner	
Carbon dioxide			Permitted subject to approval following inspection		
Neck dislocation					Permitted

12.5.7 Stun to bleed times

Method	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry	Deer
Penetrative captive bolt	Less than 60 seconds	Less than 20 seconds	Immediate		Less than 60 seconds
Electrocution	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted		
Free bullet	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Not permitted	Permitted
Electronarcosis – dry electrodes		Less than 20 seconds	Less than 60 seconds		
Electronarcosis - waterbath					Less than 10 seconds
Carbon dioxide			ASAP		

12.5.8 Bleeding must be rapid, profuse and complete. For cattle, sheep and pigs bleeding must be with a chest or thoracic stick. For poultry by cutting the carotid arteries and jugular veins.

12.6 Processing

12.6.1 Tenderisation of meat is permitted.

12.6.2 Electrical tenderisation or dressing must not take place until at least 20 seconds for pigs and sheep and for 30 seconds for cattle after the animal has bled.

12.6.3 Where the abattoir also slaughters non-organic animals, the organic animals must be slaughtered and dressed as the first operation of the day or straight after a thorough clean of the line and as the first of that species. This must be confirmed by the kill records and cleaning records.

12.6.4 Organic animals and meat must be kept separate and identified at all stages of slaughter, dressing and storage.

12.6.5 A responsible person must be nominated to check the animals and meat through the process to maintain the organic integrity.

12.7 Storage

12.7.1 Organic carcasses must be kept on a separate rail in the chill so that they are not in contact with non-organic meat. This may be permanently or temporarily dedicated.

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12.7.2 The rails must be labelled as containing organic meat and secured so that they are under the control of the responsible person and cannot be used for non-organic meat.

12.8 Labelling

12.8.1 The whole carcass or side must be labelled with the kill date, identification number and weight as soon as possible after slaughter.

12.8.2 Where organic edible offals are to be marketed as organic, they must be separated and labelled as they are removed from the carcass to ensure traceability and non-mixing with non-organic offals.

12.8.3 Once certified, an organic meat stamp will be issued to the abattoir. This must be under the control of a named person or persons who are allowed to apply the stamp.

12.8.4 The stamp must be applied to organic carcasses, sides, quarters and primals as soon as possible after slaughter.