

GENERAL CIRCULAR

This general circular contains important information from the NSW Food Authority for all red meat domestic abattoirs.

Please take the time to read this information.

If you have any queries, please contact

NSW Food Authority Helpline on 1300 552 406.

General Circular 05/2012

To: All NSW red meat domestic abattoirs

Subject: Training requirements for red meat domestic abattoirs

Issue

Implementation of improved animal welfare requirements as a condition of licence for red meat domestic abattoirs.

Background

The Authority licenses all NSW abattoirs under Food Regulation 2010 (the Regulation).

Any company that processes and slaughters livestock in Australia must comply with the *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* (AS4996:2007), which is referenced in Food Regulation 2010.

A review by the NSW Food Authority of animal welfare standards in domestic abattoirs has confirmed that staff competency and skills in animal welfare are varied and that improvement is required to implement and manage animal welfare obligations consistently throughout the sector.

The findings from the abattoir review strongly suggest that staff competency and skills in animal welfare, including accountability of management, need to be addressed to change practices and culture in some premises. In particular, the review confirmed the need for minimum animal welfare training for operational staff and better verification processes to facilitate management oversight, including the need for better documented systems.

Training requirements

To improve staff compliance of animal welfare standards, all red meat abattoirs must implement the following requirements as conditions of the licence issued under Food Regulation 2010:

1. Each abattoir will designate an animal welfare officer (AWO) to be on premises while processing is occurring. Only staff trained in the relevant component of the MTM11 Australian Meat Industry Training Package will be eligible. The designated person may have other duties, eg quality assurance (QA) officer, but must have the capacity to routinely monitor the requirements for animal welfare within the company's food safety program. All NSW domestic abattoirs must meet this requirement by **1 January 2013**. The Authority will fund three (3) courses at regional locations to facilitate this specific requirement.
2. All relevant employees must be trained in the 'stunning, sticking, and shackling' component of the MTM11 Australian Meat Industry Training Package by **1 July 2013**.
3. Adoption of the *Industry Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments: Preparing Meat for Human Consumption*, 2nd Edition, Section 2, to underpin AS4696.

Further details will be made available to abattoirs about training providers, locations and dates following further discussions with AMIC.

Changes to current abattoir audit program

Changes to the current abattoir audit program include the introduction of an additional annual audit that focuses on animal welfare. This audit may also involve officers from the Department of Primary Industries. A sanctions policy is being developed, based on an escalating compliance and enforcement model, to address any noncompliance with these requirements.

Action required

Abattoirs must comply with the training requirements outlined in this circular by the dates specified.

Enquiries

Please direct any enquiries to:

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