

Welfare of animals during transport

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Although the United Kingdom has left the European Union (EU), certain pieces of legislation (formally known as 'retained EU law') will still apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation; this means that you will still see references to EU regulations in our guidance.

This guidance is for England

Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 *on the protection of animals during transport and related operations* (implemented in England by the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006) applies to persons who transport live vertebrate animals, including farm livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, poultry, deer and horses) in connection with an economic activity (in other words, a business or trade).

Animals must be fit for the intended journey and no person must transport or cause an animal to be transported in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering.

The Regulation does not apply to the transport of animals when not in connection with an economic activity or to the transport of invertebrate animals. However, a general duty-of-care provision exists, protecting invertebrates and animals involved in non-commercial movements from injury or unnecessary suffering.

Further requirements for horses are covered in '[Transporting horses by road](#)', and for poultry in '[Poultry and markets](#)'.

Principal requirements

All persons who transport animals, however far, have a duty to ensure that the animals are transported in a way that is not likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering. They must be transported in a means of transport and under conditions that are suitable for that animal.

Farmers transporting their own animals must ensure that:

- no person transports an animal or causes animals to be transported in a way that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering
- all necessary arrangements have been made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet the animals' needs during the journey
- the animals are fit for the journey
- the means of transport (including the means of loading and unloading) is designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering and ensure the safety of the animals (see '**Means of transport**' below)
- the personnel handling the animals are trained or competent in the transport of animals
- the transport is carried out without delay and the welfare conditions of the animals can be checked during the journey
- sufficient floor area and height is provided for the animals
- the animals are watered / fed and rested at suitable intervals as necessary

Fitness of animals for transport

Animals must be fit for the intended journey before the journey starts and must remain sufficiently fit throughout the journey.

Animals that are injured, weak or diseased must not be considered fit for transport, particularly if they:

- are unable to move without pain, or to walk unassisted
- have a severe open wound or prolapse
- are pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed, or they are females who have given birth in the previous week
- are newborn mammals in which the navel has not healed
- have been submitted to veterinary procedures in relation to farming practices such as dehorning or castration and the wounds have not completely healed

Sedatives must not be used on animals to be transported, unless under veterinary supervision.

If any animals do fall ill or become injured during transport they must be separated, given appropriate veterinary treatment and if necessary undergo emergency slaughter or killing in a way that does not cause them undue suffering.

Transport requirements for young animals

Appropriate bedding must be provided for:

- piglets of less than 10 kg
- lambs of less than 20 kg
- calves less than six months old

The bedding material must provide comfort appropriate to the species and ensure adequate absorption of

urine and faeces.

Means of transport

The means of transport must be designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to :

- protect the animals from pain and injury
- protect the animals from extreme temperatures and adverse changes in climatic conditions
- allow each animal adequate ventilation
- permit access to allow the animals to be inspected

The means of transport should:

- provide anti-slip flooring
- have barriers to prevent animals falling and escaping from any upper floors and lifting platforms
- provide partitions strong enough to withstand the weight of the animal
- have fittings designed for quick and easy operation

Vehicles must carry suitable equipment for loading and unloading. The vehicles' surface, including the loading and unloading equipment, must enable cleansing and disinfection between journeys. For vehicle cleansing and disinfection requirements please refer to '[Cleansing and disinfection of vehicles](#)'.

Ramps must not be steeper than an angle of 20° (36.4% to the horizontal) for pigs, calves and horses; and an angle of 26° 34 minutes (50% to the horizontal) for sheep and cattle other than calves.

Where the slope is steeper than 10° (17.6% to the horizontal) ramps must be fitted with a system such as that provided by foot battens, which ensure that the animals climb or go down without risks or difficulties.

Space allowances

The space allowances given below are for transport by road. They are taken from Chapter VII of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 (see link in '**Key legislation**' below), which also includes information on space allowances for other methods of transport.

Space allowances for cattle

Category	Approximate weight (kg)	Area (m² per animal)
small calves	50	0.3 - 0.4
medium sized calves	110	0.4 - 0.7
heavy calves	200	0.7 - 0.95
medium size cattle	325	0.95 - 1.3
heavy cattle	550	1.3 - 1.6
very heavy cattle	more than 700	more than 1.6

Space allowances for sheep and goats

Category	Weight (kg)	Area (m² per animal)
shorn sheep and lambs of 26 kg and over less than 55	26 - 55	0.2 - 0.3
shorn sheep and lambs of 26 kg and over more than 55	more than 55	more than 0.3

Category	Weight (kg)	Area (m² per animal)
unshorn sheep	less than 55	0.3 - 0.4
unshorn sheep	more than 55	more than 0.4
heavily pregnant ewes	less than 55	0.4 - 0.5
heavily pregnant ewes	more than 55	more than 0.5
goats	less than 35	0.2 - 0.3
goats	35 - 55	0.3 - 0.4
goats	more than 55	0.4 - 0.75
heavily pregnant goats	less than 55	0.4 - 0.5
heavily pregnant goats	more than 55	more than 0.5

Space allowances for pigs

Pigs must be able to lie down and stand up in their natural position. In order to comply with the minimum requirements, the loading density for pigs of around 100 kg should not exceed 235 kg/m².

Planning obligations

Before commencing a journey, transporters must ensure they have the following in place:

- necessary arrangements have been made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet the animals' needs during the journey (as provided in the information above)
- transport authorisations. Anyone transporting animals over 65 km (approximately 40 miles) must hold a transporter authorisation. A certificate of competence for the species being transported is required for anyone either driving or attending to the animals during transport. For more information please refer to ['Transporting livestock by road: paperwork'](#)
- anyone transporting cattle over 50 km (approximately 31 miles) must carry an animal transport certificate. The movement of pigs, goats and sheep must always be accompanied by a movement licence. More information can be found in ['Transporting livestock by road: paperwork'](#). Businesses transporting livestock over eight hours must have their vehicle approved and keep a journey log
- arrangements have been made to ensure specified legal journey time limits can be met. For more information please refer to ['Farm animal transport journey times'](#)

Personnel

An attendant must accompany the animals, except where the driver performs the functions of an attendant. All attendants must hold a certificate of competence for the species of animals transported. More information can be found in ['Transporting livestock by road: paperwork'](#); this guide also includes information on transporting livestock to (or through) the EU.

When handling the animals, attendants must not:

- strike or kick the animals
- apply pressure to a particular sensitive part of the body to cause unnecessary suffering
- suspend the animals by mechanical means
- lift or drag the animals by the head, ears, horns, legs, tails or fleece
- use prods with pointed ends
- obstruct any animal being driven or led

Trading standards

For more information on the work of trading standards services - and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law - please see ['Trading standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'](#).

In this update

Extra information added to the tables in the '**Space allowances**' section.

Last reviewed / updated: August 2022

Key legislation

[Animal Health Act 1981](#)

[Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005](#) *on the protection of animals during transport and related operations*

[Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(England\) Order 2006](#)

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links often only shows the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on changes to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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