

Republic of Latvia
Cabinet
Regulation No. 21
Adopted 8 January 2013

**Requirements for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes
which are Intended for Slaughter**

Issued pursuant to Section 10,
Clauses 1 and 23 of the
Animal Protection Law

I. General Provisions

1. This Regulation prescribes:

1.1. the requirements for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes which are intended for slaughter (hereinafter – animals) during keeping before slaughter, stunning and killing thereof;

1.2. the procedures by which training regarding animal welfare during slaughtering shall be performed and a certification regarding training performed shall be issued, suspended and annulled, as well as the procedures for registration of the trained persons.

2. Terms are used in this Regulation within the meaning of Article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing (hereinafter – Regulation No 1099/2009).

3. The functions of the competent authority specified in Regulation No 1099/2009 (except the cases referred to in Articles 20 and 21 thereof) shall be fulfilled by the Food and Veterinary Service (hereinafter – Service).

4. The scientific support specified in Article 20 of Regulation No 1099/2009 shall be ensured by the State scientific institute “Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment “BIOR””.

5. The function of the competent authority specified in Article 21 of Regulation No 1099/2009 in the field of training regarding animal welfare during slaughtering and the activities related thereto shall be fulfilled by the limited liability company “Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre” (hereinafter – Training Centre).

6. The development and dissemination of guides to good practice specified in Article 13 of Regulation No 1099/2009 shall be under the supervision of professional associations and foundations in the field of meat processing.

II. Requirements for Keeping before Slaughter and Stunning of Animals

7. There shall be equipment (platforms, ramps or bridges) in the territory of the slaughterhouse for unloading animals from vehicles.

8. Equipment for unloading of animals shall be equipped with lateral protection to ensure that animals cannot fall off. Floors of equipment shall be made from a material that is not slippery, is without gaps and intermediate sections hindering movement of animals. The slope degree of equipment for unloading of animals shall not exceed 20 degrees.

9. Animals shall be unloaded without delay after arrival. If it is not possible to unload animals without delay, ventilation and protection against unfavourable weather conditions shall be ensured. If unloading lasts more than four hours, the fulfilment of the requirements referred to in Annex I, Chapter III, Paragraph 1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 shall be ensured.

10. In passageways of a slaughterhouse the risk of injury to animals shall be minimised and animals shall be provided with an opportunity to exploit their gregarious tendencies (to keep moving if there is a free space in front and to follow the first animals of the herd. Instruments intended for guiding animals shall be used for short periods and only for the purpose of guiding animals.

11. If animals are not slaughtered immediately after unloading, they shall be kept separately, taking into the account their age, species, gender and origin, as well as aggressive animals shall be separated.

12. If animals are not slaughtered immediately after unloading, they shall be placed in pens, stalls or fields where they have access to fresh drinking water. Cattle, pigs, sheep and goats shall be slaughtered within 72 hours after their unloading. Birds and wild animals reared in confined spaces shall be slaughtered within 12 hours and horses – within 24 hours after their unloading.

13. Stalls arranged in the premises of a slaughterhouse for accommodation of animals shall be as many as necessary to freely accommodate all animals therein and to ensure that animals are protected from unfavourable weather conditions. In pens and stalls situated outside the premises of a slaughterhouse protection of animals against unfavourable weather conditions, as well as against physical, chemical or other exposure, which may cause harm to the health of animals, shall be ensured.

14. Pens or stalls shall be equipped with the following:

14.1. equipment for tying of animals, if necessary;

14.2. litter or alternative material, which guarantees drainage and absorption of urine and faeces and appropriate comfort level of the animal, if the animal stays overnight in the pen or stall;

14.3. ventilation. If ventilation is ensured by an automatic device, backup ventilation system operating during damage in the basic system shall also be installed;

14.4. floors, which minimise the possibility of slipping and the material of which cannot cause injury to animals;

14.5. sufficient natural or artificial lighting, as well as, if necessary, additional lighting in order to carry out an inspection of animals.

15. If, using electrical current, animals are stunned individually, the equipment for stunning animals shall contain the following:

15.1. a clearly legible scale for measuring the voltage and strength of electrical current;

15.2. a device for turning off the stunning equipment, if the minimum flow of electrical current necessary for stunning is not ensured;

15.3. an audible or visual signal for determination of duration to exposure of electrical current.

16. Using waterbath for stunning of poultry, the following requirements shall be observed:

16.1. the water level shall be adjusted so that the head of the bird would be in contact with water;

16.2. the voltage of the current is sufficiently high to stun all birds (if several birds are stunned concurrently);

16.3. the size and depth of the waterbath conforms to the size of birds, and the waterbath does not overflow when birds are placed therein. The length of the electrode submerged in water shall exceed the length of the waterbath.

17. Using carbon dioxide for stunning of pigs, the following requirements shall be observed:

17.1. the chamber shall be formed so that pigs would not injure themselves or crush thorax and could remain upright until losing consciousness. The chamber shall have lighting so that pigs could see each other or the surroundings;

17.2. the chamber shall be equipped with an equipment ensuring measurements of carbon dioxide concentration and visual or audible warning signal, if gas concentration is less than 70 per cent of the total air volume in the chamber.

III. Requirements for Cattle and Sheep Slaughtering According to the Traditional Meat Production Methods of Religious Communities

18. Permanent supervision of the slaughtering referred to in this Chapter for each animal shall be performed by a veterinarian authorised by the Service.

19. Slaughtering of cattle and sheep according to the traditional meat production methods of religious communities shall be allowed in a slaughterhouse recognised for this purpose, conforming to the requirements specified in Regulation No 852/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and Regulation No 853/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

20. Each animal shall be placed in a relevant mechanically restricting equipment fixing the head of the animal.

21. Slaughtering shall be performed using a knife appropriate for the purpose, cutting the external jugular veins (*v.jugularis externa dextra et sinistra*) and the common carotid arteries (*a.carotis communis dextra et sinistra*).

22. After making the cut, stunning after slaughtering shall be performed without delay in accordance with the requirements referred to in Annex I, Chapter I, Table 1, Paragraph one of Regulation No 1099/2009.

23. Prior to commencing removal of the skin, separation of body parts or internal organs, the veterinarian authorised by the Service shall ascertain whether the animal is dead.

IV. Procedures for Performing Training Regarding Animal Welfare during Slaughtering and Issuance and Cancellation of a Certification Regarding Training Performed, as well as the Procedures for Registration of the Trained Persons

24. The Training Centre shall co-ordinate the developed training programme with the Service.
25. The Training Centre may recognise the acquired experience as equivalent to training and issue a certificate certifying the knowledge to persons who have work experience of at least three consecutive years.
26. The qualification certificate shall be renewed after measures for raising the qualification every five years.
27. The Training Centre shall, within five working days after issuance of the qualification certificate, ensure the Service with access to information regarding the trained persons, indicating the following information:
- 27.1. the given name, surname and personal identity number;
 - 27.2. the date of issue of the qualification certificate;
 - 27.3. the number of the qualification certificate;
 - 27.4. the activities, for the performance of which the qualification certificate has been issued;
 - 27.5. the animal categories, with which the person is entitled to perform the relevant activities;
 - 27.6. the types of equipment, which the person may use for the performance of the relevant activities.
28. If the trained person does not certify sufficient competence, knowledge or understanding of his or her duties in order to continue the performance of activities, for the performance of which the qualification certificate has been issued, the Service shall take a decision on suspending the operation of the qualification certificate, taking into account the non-conformities, which cause unnecessary and unjustified suffering, pain and stress to an animal, or the previously registered non-conformities.
29. The Service shall, within two working days after taking of a decision on suspending the operation of the qualification certificate, in accordance with Article 22(2) of Regulation No 1099/2009 inform the Training Centre regarding suspension of operation of the qualification certificate of the relevant person, indicating the reasons for suspension.
30. The Training Centre shall suspend the operation of the qualification certificate and, within two working days, inform the person regarding suspension of operation of the qualification certificate.
31. The person for whom the operation of the qualification certificate has been suspended, shall take a repeated test within three months from the day when the qualification certificate was suspended.
32. After passing the tests, the Training Centre shall renew the suspended qualification certificate and, within two working days, ensure the Service with access to information regarding the renewed qualification certificate.
33. If the person does not renew the qualification certificate within the time period specified in Paragraph 31 of this Regulation, the qualification certificate shall be cancelled and the Training Centre shall, within two working days from the day when the qualification certificate was cancelled, inform the Service regarding the cancelled qualification certificate.

34. If a person has been punished for cruelty towards animals, as well as for repeated violations (during a year) in protection of animals during slaughtering and activities related thereto, the Service shall take a decision on cancellation of the qualification certificate.

35. The Service shall, within two working days after taking of a decision on cancellation of the qualification certificate, inform the Training Centre regarding cancellation of the qualification certificate of the particular person.

36. The Training Centre shall, within two working days from the day when the qualification certificate was cancelled, ensure the Service with access to information regarding the cancelled qualification certificate, as well as inform the person regarding cancellation of the qualification certificate thereof.

V. Closing Provisions

37. Cabinet Regulation No. 310 of 17 June 2003, *Requirements for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes which are Intended for Slaughter* (*Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 2003, No. 93; 2009, No. 172; 2011, No. 105), is repealed.

38. Chapter II of this Regulation shall be in force until 8 December 2019. If slaughterhouses have been built or rebuilt or equipment has been changed therein after 1 January 2013, they shall conform to the requirements referred to in Annex II of Regulation No 1099/2009.

39. Paragraph 25 of this Regulation shall be in force until 8 December 2015.

40. This Regulation shall apply as of 1 January 2013.

Informative Reference to the European Union Directives

This Regulation contains legal norms arising from:

- 1) Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing;
- 2) Council Directive 64/432/EEC of 26 June 1964 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine; and
- 3) Council Directive 2003/50/EC of 11 June 2003 amending Directive 91/68/EEC as regards reinforcement of controls on movements of ovine and caprine animals.

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