

## GENERAL CIRCULAR

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

Please take the time to read this information.

If you have any queries, please contact

NSW Food Authority Consumer & Industry Helpline on 1300 552 406

## General Circular 01/2012

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**To:** All licensed red meat abattoirs in NSW  
**Subject:** Management responsibilities for animal welfare at abattoirs

### Background

The Authority has taken immediate action to cause a Sydney abattoir to cease operation due to animal welfare breaches.

### Obligations and responsibilities of abattoirs in relation to animal welfare

All NSW abattoirs are reminded of their obligations and responsibilities to ensure the humane treatment of animals. All abattoirs operating in NSW are required to hold a licence and operate in accordance with the Food Regulation 2010. Under the Food Regulation 2010, abattoirs are required to comply with the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696:2007) as in force from time to time.

This standard requires that 'Animals are slaughtered in a way that prevents unnecessary injury, pain and suffering to them and causes them the least practicable disturbance' (AS 4696:2007 Clause 7.9)' and 'Before sticking commences, animals are stunned in a way that ensures the animals are unconscious and insensible to pain before sticking occurs and do not regain consciousness or sensibility before dying' (AS 4696:2007 Clause 7.10).

In relation to animal handling the standard requires that 'Animals are handled at meat premises in a way that minimises the risk of injury, pain and suffering and causes the least practicable disturbance to them and to other animals at the premises' (AS 4696:2007 Clause 7.2).

The Authority will be ramping up unannounced inspections and audits of domestic abattoirs in NSW starting immediately. Under a formal agreement with DAFF (formerly AQIS), animal welfare issues will also be monitored in export registered plants by DAFF officers. Where Food Authority officers encounter animal welfare breaches, immediate enforcement action in accordance with the Authority's Compliance & Enforcement policy will be taken. This can include the ceasing of all operations, licence suspension or cancellation and/or fines of up to \$275,000. Any welfare breaches will also be reported to the Police and RSPCA.

The welfare of animals in NSW is protected under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA) 1979 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (General) Regulation 2006 which are overseen by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Under POCTA fines of up to \$110,000 or two years imprisonment apply for acts of aggravated acts of cruelty to animals.

### Enquiries

Please direct any enquiries to:

Contact	Phone	Fax
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