

# ABATTOIR STAFF AND VISITOR HYGIENE AND WORK RULES

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## Hazards in the Workplace

Due to several characteristics of the job, injuries and illnesses are more common in the meat, poultry and fish industries than other manufacturing sectors. Employees and visitors must work in the presence of a variety of health and safety risks. Depending on the position, technology employed, surroundings and types of meat handled, workers and visitors may be at risk for the following hazards:

Since the weight and size of each animal varies, employees must use non-electric knives and power tools for various tasks. Regardless of their shape, knives are extremely sharp and can cause serious injuries when workers' hands are wet, greasy and slippery from handling raw meat.

There is a large technological gap between processing and production tasks. As opposed to highly automated chilling, smoking, curing, slicing and packaging procedures, dismemberment, cutting and deboning must be done by hand, and workers may feel pressured to keep up with the technology used in other parts of the operation. When workers rush, mistakes and accidents occur.

Workers may be required to exert a lot of force repeatedly with their hands and arms.

Workers are also exposed to extreme heat and cold in the workplace.

Cold temperatures can cause a variety of physical problems, including frostbite and respiratory disorders. Cold temperatures can also reduce the dexterity in workers' hands, which can lead to injuries when working with sharp objects.

Employees assigned to work near ovens, smokehouses and other hot cooking areas of the facility are at risk of burns, heat rash, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Due to cleaning of the facility, wet floors are a hazard. Though cleaning is essential for the health of your employees and for the safety of the food, it also presents slip and fall concerns.

Floors may be greasy in areas where fat falls on the ground. If workers are pressured to perform quickly, they may be sloppier and may drop more fat on the floor.

Noise pollution in the workplace presents dangers to workers. Prolonged exposure to loud noises leads to hearing impairment and loss.

Infected meat and birds are dangerous to those who handle them in the workplace. Employees

may be at risk for contracting a zoonotic disease, such as leptospirosis, Q fever, brucellosis, anthrax, erysipeloid, salmonellosis, tetanus, tuberculosis or toxoplasmosis. The bacteria causing these diseases are found in urine, faeces, vaginal discharge, and in the milk of infected animals. When workers with broken skin handle meat, they are exposed to viruses. These viruses can infect workers through the mouth, nose and eyes or through the inhalation of infected dust and aerosols. Infected workers may experience fever, headaches, vomiting, diarrhoea, and kidney damage. Employees should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) on their mouths, noses and eyes. They should also cover any parts of their bodies that come in direct contact with animal parts, and obtain vaccinations against viruses.

Workers in the meat and poultry industry, including contracted clean-up and sanitation workers, can suffer a host of serious injuries and illnesses that affect the musculoskeletal system. Many of these injuries, such as those to the arms, hands and wrists, are due to the repetitive motions associated with work tasks. Overexertion, sprains, strains, tears, hernias and fatigue can cause back pain and other problems. Workers also risk injuries and even death from falling or being struck by an object.

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## Basic hygiene rules in the Workplace

1. All staff and visitors must wear clean overalls and hats each day when handling raw meat. Waterproof boots must be washed in the boot wash on entering leaving the slaughter hall.
2. Overalls and hats must not be worn outside the premises except when involved with delivery.
3. Staff and visitors must not wear watches or jewellery except a plain band wedding ring.
4. Staff and visitors must not wear strong perfume or aftershave.
5. Food and drink must not be consumed in the slaughter and or meat preparation area and may only be consumed in food rooms or storeroom when it will not cause contamination to any of the products.

Smoking is prohibited except in the designated area.

6. Hands must be washed thoroughly with soap and water:
  - before starting work
  - after breaks
  - after visiting the toilet or on return to the workplace
  - after touching hide/fleece and before handling the carcass
  - after dealing with any gut/stomach spillage or removal of faecal contamination on the carcass
  - after coughing into the hand or using a handkerchief

- after eating, drinking or smoking
- after touching face or hair
- after carrying out any cleaning
- after removing waste or rubbish

7. Slaughter staff and visitors must not allow a build up of blood/meat debris on hands and finger nails, hands and arms should be washed regularly throughout the slaughter and dressing process.

8. Staff and visitors must not blow their nose, or cough or sneeze over exposed carcase meat

9. Hair and fingernails must be kept clean. Nail varnish must not be worn.

10. Staff and visitors must inform the manager if they are suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea, other stomach upsets, skin complaints, or cuts. Cuts and abrasions must be covered by an easily detectable waterproof dressing, e.g. blue in colour, and be reported to supervisor/manager.

11. Carcase meat should be handled as little as possible.

12. Staff must ensure that raw food does not come into contact with cooked/ready to eat food.

13. Staff must not use the same equipment or working surfaces for raw and cooked ready to eat foods without thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting them first

14. Staff and visitors must protect carcase meat at all times from contamination.

15. Keep meat containers off the floor.

16. Mobile phones are NOT PERMITTED in the abattoir

I have read the Staff and Visitor Hygiene and Work Rules, and agree to abide to them.