



**Guidelines for Establishment Operators, Animal Producers and Agents  
Emergency Slaughter Under the B.C. Meat Inspection Regulation**

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## Introduction

The B.C. Government's Meat Inspection Program reinforces the province's reputation for safe and wholesome meat through the current safeguards and inspection system in provincially licensed slaughter establishments.

In exceptional circumstances, emergency slaughter of red meat or ratite species animals may be necessary to prevent undue suffering of animals or where there is a high risk of significant injury to humans.

The Meat Inspection Program is authorized to permit the emergency slaughter of animals at a provincially licensed abattoir establishment or on a farm when a Meat Hygiene Inspector is not present. In both these situations, the emergency slaughter must occur under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner.

This document provides establishment operators, animal producers and agents with the requirements for conducting emergency slaughter.

## Requirements for Emergency Slaughter at a Provincially Licensed Establishment

When an animal or animals must be slaughtered for humane reasons, and a Meat Hygiene Inspector is not present to approve the slaughter, the establishment operator may either:

- euthanize the animal or animals, and remove and destroy the carcass or carcasses without approval, or
- conduct the emergency slaughter and hold the carcass or carcasses for inspection.

If the establishment operator conducts an emergency slaughter, they must comply with the following requirements:

1. If a Meat Hygiene Inspector is not scheduled to be at the establishment within 24 hours of the slaughter, the establishment operator must notify the Meat Inspection Program Regional Supervisor of the required emergency slaughter.
2. The establishment operator must hire the services of a veterinary practitioner who is familiar with the species to attend the establishment prior to the slaughter. The establishment operator is responsible for the cost of the veterinarian practitioner's services.
  - The veterinary practitioner must perform an ante mortem inspection (clinical examination) of the animal or animals and deem them fit for slaughter. The veterinary practitioner must approve that emergency slaughter is required.
  - The veterinary practitioner must complete the relevant section of the **"Approved Emergency Slaughter at a Provincially Licensed Establishment"** document for each animal.

3. The establishment operator must slaughter the animal or animals and identify each carcass as held.
  - The establishment operator must hang carcasses on the Held Rail so that no carcass is brought into contact with any other carcass, and
  - The establishment operator must store the head or heads and offal separately from carcasses in a manner that allows heads and offal to be matched with the source carcass to allow for a complete post-mortem inspection.
4. The establishment operator must notify the Meat Hygiene Inspector about the emergency slaughter as soon as the Inspector arrives for their shift at the establishment and provide the Meat Hygiene Inspector with the **“Approved Emergency Slaughter at a Provincially Licensed Establishment” document**.
  - The Meat Hygiene Inspector will perform the post-mortem inspection of carcass or carcasses, heads, and offal as soon as is practicable.

### **Requirements for an Emergency Slaughter On-Farm**

The animal producer or agent must comply with the following requirements when an emergency slaughter is required on a farm to ensure that there is no undue suffering due to transport or any significant risk of injury to humans.

1. The producer or agent will obtain pre-approval from the establishment operator that the establishment can accept the carcass or carcasses before slaughter.
2. The establishment operator must only accept delivery of a carcass or carcasses if:
  - A Meat Hygiene Inspector is scheduled to be on-site at the establishment to accept delivery of the carcass or carcasses, and
  - The slaughter establishment licence includes slaughter of the species of animal for which approval is being requested.

If both of the criteria are not met, the establishment operator must contact and obtain approval from the Meat Inspection Program Regional Supervisor to receive delivery of the emergency slaughtered carcass or carcasses.

3. The producer or agent must only hire the services of a veterinary practitioner who is familiar with the species to attend the location prior to the slaughter. The producer or agent is responsible for the cost of the veterinarian practitioner’s services.
  - The veterinary practitioner must perform an ante mortem examination (clinical examination) of the animal or animals and deem them fit for slaughter. The veterinary practitioner must approve that emergency slaughter is required.

- A veterinary practitioner must complete the relevant section of the **“Approved Emergency Slaughter On-Farm” document** for each animal and ensure that the document is transported with the carcass or carcasses to the establishment.
4. The producer or agent must obtain a specified risk material (SRM) transportation permit for all emergency slaughtered cattle prior to transporting to the slaughter establishment, as per federal regulation. Note that the bled carcass is considered SRM in its entirety regardless of its age because the distal ileum of all *Bos indicus* and *Bos taurus* carcasses is legally defined as SRM.
  5. The producer or agent must ensure that there is no food safety risk resulting from the method of transportation.
    - The trailer must be clean so that further contamination of the carcass or carcasses does not occur.
    - Care must be taken to ensure that carcasses are free of manure or other debris and that any bodily fluids exiting from carcasses are contained. This includes brain tissue and blood that may seep out of a stun wound in the head.
    - The maximum time allowed for delivery of carcasses from the time of stunning is two hours. Shorter delivery times may be specified depending on the method of transportation (no refrigeration) and seasonal temperatures. Shipment during warm weather may necessitate shipping times as short as 30-45 minutes.
  6. The establishment operator must immediately notify the Meat Hygiene Inspector when or carcasses arrive at the establishment.
    - The Meat Hygiene Inspector must observe the unloading of carcasses.
    - The establishment operator must immediately eviscerate and chill carcasses.
  7. The establishment operator must give the **“Approved Emergency Slaughter On-Farm” document** to the Meat Hygiene Inspector before the post-mortem inspection.

### **Post-mortem Inspection of Emergency Slaughtered Carcasses**

The Meat Hygiene Inspector must verify that all emergency slaughter requirements were met and will conduct the post-mortem inspection of emergency slaughtered carcasses, heads, and offal.

The final disposition of carcasses will be based on the ante-mortem and organoleptic findings at post-mortem. The Meat Inspection Program Veterinarian may also be called upon to evaluate a carcass.

Approved carcasses must be marked with the B.C. Inspection Legend stamp to indicate approval for sale in B.C. as an inspected meat product.

## Documentation for Emergency Slaughter

This guideline document and the two forms: “**Approved Emergency Slaughter On-Farm**” and “**Approved Emergency Slaughter at a Provincially Licensed Establishment**” are posted on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food website.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection-licensing/abattoir-licences>

The “**Guidelines for Veterinary Practitioners for Emergency Slaughter**” are also posted on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food website.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection-licensing/abattoir-licences>

SRM permits can be obtained by contacting the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at 1.800.788-8155 or at the nearest CFIA District Office. Carcasses will not be accepted at a slaughter establishment unless accompanied by the required SRM transport permit.

## Contact Us

For more information, please visit our website at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection-licensing>

Or contact us at: [bcmeatinspection@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bcmeatinspection@gov.bc.ca)