

Animal Welfare (Pigs) Code of Welfare 2005, Minimum Standards



Note: Under the Act the “owner” and “person in charge” are responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. Generally a stock handler is the “person in charge” of the animals at a particular point in time. In practice this will depend on the minimum standard in question.

Minimum Standard No.1 – Feed

- (a) Feed must be available to weaners at least twice daily and to all other pigs at least daily.
- (b) Feed must be provided in such a way as to prevent undue competition and injury.
- (c) Pigs must receive adequate quantities of food and nutrients to enable each pig to:
 - (i) maintain good health;
 - (ii) meet its physiological requirements; and
 - (iii) avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.
- (d) Automatic feeding systems must be checked at least once every 24 hours to ensure they are in working order and any problems rectified promptly.
- (v) When the body condition score of grower and finisher pigs, gilts, sows and boars falls below 2.5 (on a scale of 1-5), remedial action either through veterinary attention improved nutrition or husbandry practice must be taken to improve body condition.
- (vi) All pigs (excluding piglets) must be maintained at a body condition score of 2 or above (on a scale of 1-5).

Minimum Standard No.2 – New-Born Piglets

- (a) All piglets must receive colostrum or an appropriate substitute within 24 hours of birth.
- (b) If a lactating sow dies, or her milk supply fails, or if her piglets are receiving inadequate nutrition, the piglets must be fostered, hand-reared or humanely destroyed.



Minimum Standard No.3 – Watering Systems

- (a) An adequate daily supply of water that is palatable and not harmful to health must be accessible to all pigs.
- (b) Pigs on pasture must have access to a water supply to meet their daily requirements.
- (c) Automatic watering systems must be checked at least once every 24 hours to ensure they are in working order and any problems rectified promptly.
- (d) The water supply for a piggery must be sufficient and the reserves adequate to cope with the 24 hour demand.
- (e) Alternative arrangements must be available in case of equipment failure to ensure that pigs get their daily water requirements.
- (f) The water delivery system must be at a height that is appropriate for the size of the animal it is supplying.
- (g) Water supplied to pigs must be at a temperature which does not inhibit drinking.



Minimum Standard No.4 – Indoors: Buildings and Maintenance

- (a) Natural or artificial light of at least 20 lux must be available at pig level in all buildings for a minimum of nine hours daily.
- (b) All pig sheds must have sufficient light of at least 20 lux available to enable inspection of animals.
- (c) All sharp projections and edges including damaged flooring likely to cause injury to pigs must be removed or covered.
- (d) Pen fittings must be kept in good working order.
- (e) Any electrical fittings and attachments to mains voltage must be out of the reach of pigs, or protected from interference or damage by pigs.
- (f) All mechanical equipment used in pig production must be maintained in good working order – this includes feeding and effluent removal equipment, drinkers, ventilation systems, lighting units, heaters, fire extinguishers, water pumps and hoses and emergency power generators.
- (g) In case of power failure or mechanical breakdown in a fully enclosed system, provision must be made for other means of heating, lighting and ventilation, and for the feeding and watering of stock.
- (h) In case of power failure or mechanical breakdown in a fully enclosed system, an alarm with a back-up battery system must be installed to warn of any ventilation system breakdown.
- (i) For deep litter systems, provision must be made to minimise the impact of flooding through water pipes bursting.
- (j) All pig sheds must contain suitable fire fighting equipment and have a documented emergency plan to be followed in the case of fire. This also applies to feed milling areas where they are adjacent to pig housing.

Minimum Standard No.5 – Indoors: Space

- (a) Each pig housed indoors must be provided with the following minimum space allowances:
 - (i) Growing pigs must be provided with an area calculated in accordance with the following formula:
Area (m²) per pig = 0.030 x live-weight 0.67(kg)
Note: Minimum space allowances for particular weights of pig are shown in the Code.
 - (ii) Breeding stock must be provided with an area determined in accordance with Table 6 below.
- (b) Where a dunging area, as part of a total slab, and/or an open drain, is provided, this area must be excluded from the calculation of the total space requirement per pig.
- (c) In hot conditions (over 25° C) steps must be taken to reduce overheating of pigs such as opening flaps and doors, misting, increasing ventilation or providing more space.
- (d) Table 6: Minimum space requirements (m²) for breeding stock

Pig Class	Area (m ²)
Unmated Gilts in groups	1.00
Mated Gilts in groups	1.50
Boars in individual stall or Crates	1.68 (0.7m x 2.4m)
Boar pens	6.0
Adult sows in groups	2.0
Pregnant Sows in individual stalls	1.20 (0.6m x 2.0m)
Lactating Sows and litters	3.2 (total area)
Farrowing crates and creep areas	

Minimum Standard No.6 – Indoors: Temperature

- (a) Provision must be made to ensure an appropriate ambient temperature range to maintain normal body temperatures of new-born piglets.
- (b) Heating devices (e.g. infrared lamps, heat pads) must be securely fixed and protected from interference by the sow and piglets.
- (c) An airflow, or other measures, that will ensure pigs do not become overheated or cold stressed must be maintained during extremes of weather.

Minimum Standard No.7 – Indoors: Air Quality

- (a) Ventilation must be sufficient to prevent the build-up of harmful concentrations of gasses such as ammonia and CO₂.
- (b) If ammonia levels of 25ppm or more are detected within the pig house during regular daily inspections (see Minimum Standard 18), immediate and appropriate action must be taken to ensure a return to levels which do not cause eye and nasal irritation in people and to reduce ammonia levels below 25ppm.

Minimum Standard No.8 – Outdoors: Environment

- (a) A warm, dry, adequately ventilated area for sleeping and resting must be provided for all classes of pig.
- (b) Piglets must be provided with a warm dry area which is adequately ventilated and protected from harmful draughts.
- (c) If there is no artificial heating, bedding materials must be available for piglets.
- (d) To prevent heat stroke or sunburn, shelter must be provided from the sun, or a wallow must be provided, or both.
- (e) Effective fencing must be provided to prevent stock from fouling drinking water and gaining access to areas containing toxic plants or other hazards.
- (f) Handling facilities must be available to deal with pigs and piglets undergoing routine procedures or for animals that are sick and requiring treatment.
- (g) Accommodation for lactating sows must be of suitable design and sufficient size to allow the sow to lie down at full length and without leg restriction. The sow must also be able to lie down, rise and stand comfortably without undue risk of injury to her litter.

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Minimum Standard No.9 – Farrowing

- (a) Whatever type of farrowing system is used, it must be of suitable design and size to allow the sow to lie down at full length and without leg restriction. Sows must also be able to rise and stand comfortably.
- (b) If sows are to be confined in farrowing crates, they must be confined for no more than 6 weeks in any one reproductive cycle.
- (c) There must be a space of 300mm width on the narrowest side of the farrowing crate to provide an escape area for the piglets.

Minimum Standard No. 10 – Dry Sow Stalls

- (a) Dry sow stalls must allow sufficient clearance to enable sows and gilts to stand comfortably in their natural stance and be able to lie comfortably on their sides.
- (b) Sows that show severe lameness or severe behavioural problems e.g. prolonged ‘dog sitting’ must be removed from dry sow stalls and placed in alternative accommodation to facilitate rehabilitation or be culled.
- (c) From 10 years after this code comes into force (1 January 2015), individual confinement in dry sow stalls must be for no more than the first 4 weeks after mating.
- (d) Dry sow stalls in any new facility built after the issue of this code must not be used to house sows and gilts from 4 weeks after mating until the completion of that pregnancy.

Minimum Standard No. 11 – Tethering

Confinement of pigs must be by methods other than tethering.

Minimum Standard No. 12 – Boars

- (a) From 5 years after this code comes into force, boars, including young boars selected for breeding purposes must be housed in accommodation other than stalls, except where individual housing to treat injury or disease is temporarily necessary.
- (b) If stalls are used, prior to minimum standard (a) taking effect, they must allow sufficient clearance to enable the boar to stand comfortably in his natural stance and to lie down comfortably on his side.
- (c) If stalls are used, prior to minimum standard (a) taking effect, daily inspections must be carried out to ensure that any skin conditions especially those arising from urine scald, are treated.
- (d) If stalls are used, prior to minimum standard (a) taking effect, boars must be removed from stalls at least twice per week either for mating purposes or to be given sufficient exercise to maintain adequate locomotory function and to prevent skeletal and muscular weakness.

Minimum Standard No. 13 – Elective Husbandry Procedures

- (a) Elective invasive procedures must be carried out by competent operators.
- (b) Surgical castration or tail docking of pigs over 7 days of age must only be carried out by a veterinarian.
- (c) If tail docking is performed, it must be done before 8 days of age and must be carried out using clippers, a searing iron, knife or other instrument that severs the tail immediately.
- (d) If performed, teeth clipping of pigs must be carried out before 3 days of age.
- (e) Non-invasive equipment must be used to measure back-fat on live animals.



Minimum Standard No. 14 – Restraint and Handling

Pigs, including piglets, must not be picked up or suspended by one or both of their front legs.

Minimum Standard No.15 – Movement

- (a) Pigs must not be prodded in sensitive areas, including the eyes, nose, anus, vulva and testicles.
- (b) Only the minimal force required must be used when moving pigs.



Minimum Standard No.16 – Weaning

Weaning must be managed in a way that avoids undue stress on the piglets and therefore minimises negative impacts on their health and welfare.

Minimum Standard No.17 – Health

- (a) Those responsible for the care of pigs must be competent at recognising the signs of good health, ill-health, or injury and must consult a veterinarian as appropriate.
- (b) Medication must only be used in accordance with registration conditions, manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.
- (c) Piglets must receive sufficient iron to avoid anaemia.
- (d) Contaminated bedding, faeces and urine must not be permitted to accumulate to the extent that they pose a threat to the health and welfare of pigs.

Minimum Standard No.18 – Inspections

The owner or person in charge must check pigs at least once each day for signs of ill-health or injury and take action as appropriate.

Minimum Standard No.19 – Pre -Transport Selection

Pigs must be inspected prior to transport to ensure all are fit to be transported.

Minimum Standard No.20 – Stockmanship

Pigs must be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence to maintain the health and welfare of the animals in accordance with the minimum standards listed in this code.