

# Ohio Livestock Care Standards



# Swine



# Ohio

## Livestock Care Standards

In November 2009, Ohio voters passed State Issue 2 approving the creation of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board. This vote demonstrated Ohioans' support for keeping the state's number one industry – food and agriculture – vibrant and strong. The board was charged with creating state standards for the care and well-being of livestock in Ohio.

The enabling language required the board to take the following into consideration when developing the standards: Best management practices for the care and well-being of livestock; Biosecurity; Disease prevention; Animal Morbidity and mortality data; Food safety practices, Protection of local, affordable food supplies for consumers; Generally accepted veterinary medical practices, livestock practice standards and ethical standards established by the American Veterinary Medical Association, and; Any other factors that the board considers necessary for the proper care and well-being of livestock in this state.

The comprehensive livestock care standards developed by the Board are meant to be practical for livestock producers of all sizes, scales and production methods and will not only assure better livestock care, but will also support the state's overarching goals of promoting safe and affordable food, and helping to prevent the outbreak of both animal and human diseases.

Unless otherwise noted in this guide, the responsibility for ensuring these livestock care standards are being kept falls on the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal.

## Swine

Ohio's livestock care standards regulate swine animals raised for human food products or fiber.

### General Welfare Considerations

#### Feed and Water

In order to help ensure the growth and maintenance of normal body condition<sup>1</sup>, animals must receive a sufficient quantity and quality of feed and water on a regular basis.

<sup>1</sup>Body condition is a determination that relates an animal's body fat and/or muscle mass to its skeletal dimension and its stage of production.

## Housing

As defined in the rules, housing means the physical area or location which is occupied by the livestock. Livestock housing and handling facilities must be designed to minimize bruising and injury. It is important that housing, handling facilities and equipment continue to be inspected and maintained. The water and feed delivery systems must be in working condition.

Outdoor housing for all stages of production must provide the following:

- a regular, ample supply of bedding in cold weather
- access to facilities or natural features that provide reasonable protection from adverse weather conditions and predators
- a method to facilitate thermo regulation, such as a natural wallow, throughout the summer

Indoor housing must seek to minimize exposure to adverse weather, must provide ventilation and alleys must be designed and maintained so as to minimize the potential for injury and bruising.

All sows and boars in stalls or pens must be able to lie down fully on their sides without their heads having to rest on a feeder and have the rear quarters come in contact with the back of the stall or pen at the same time. An animal must also be allowed to stand back up without its back touching the top of the stall or pen.

Farrowing sows and piglets must have a clean, dry, sanitary, and comfortable space which provides an appropriate thermal environment. Farrowing stalls must be designed to maximize neo-natal piglet welfare. Sows farrowing outdoors must be provided shade in hot weather, shelter from prevailing winds, and a regular, ample supply of bedding to minimize frost bite in cold weather.

Post-weaning indoor mechanically ventilated housing must be clean, dry, well heated and draft free. Post-weaning indoor non-mechanically ventilated housing must provide protection from direct sunlight in warm weather, protection from adverse weather conditions and must provide supplemental heat or a regular, ample supply of bedding in cold weather.



All animals must also have access to feed and water without excessive competition. In general, stocking densities must allow all pigs, at all stages of production, to easily lie down fully on their side at the same time without having to lie on each other and be able to easily stand back up.

Adequate lighting must be available for inspection purposes. The light can be provided by electric lighting, or may be as minimal as a flashlight, natural sunlight or a portable light source for indoor or outdoor inspection. If natural light is not available, artificial light must be provided for the animals for at the least the normal period of daylight hours.

### **Housing Transition**

Ohio's livestock care standards require that anyone raising swine in the state of Ohio transition to employing group housing methods for pregnant sows (after they are confirmed pregnant) by December 31, 2025. When employing this method, mixing of animals must be done in a manner which minimizes aggression and the risk of injury. In boar housing systems, the unnecessary mixing or the introduction of new animals into established groups must be avoided to minimize aggression and the risk of injury.

Gestation stalls for pregnant sows can be used in all existing facilities until December 31, 2025. An existing facility is defined as any building or structure that currently house swine (utilizing any housing system) as of the September 29, 2011.

Beginning January 1, 2026, breeding/gestation stalls can only be used post-weaning for a period of time that seeks to maximize embryonic welfare and allow for the confirmation of pregnancy. A breeding/gestation stall is defined as any configuration in which a mature animal is continuously housed, and in which the animal cannot turn around or freely enter or exit.

After September 29, 2011, any new construction, or new construction on an existing facility, cannot use breeding/gestation stalls except to house sows to maximize embryonic welfare and allow for the confirmation of pregnancy.

It is important to note that the rules do not prohibit the repair and/or the maintenance of existing gestation stalls if still in use until December 31, 2025. Also, existing facilities can be replaced (in the case of catastrophic event, such as fire, flood, wind or building collapse) until December 31, 2025.

## **Special Circumstances**

Beginning January 1, 2026, individual stall housing will be permitted after confirmation of pregnancy only for special circumstances, such as to treat an injury or to separate frail, thin or aggressive swine that jeopardize their own welfare or the welfare of other pigs.

It is important to note that farrowing stalls will continue to be allowed for use on all existing and new farms.

## Equipment

Livestock handling equipment must also be designed and maintained in order to minimize bruising and injury. Distress can occur when livestock are injured, sick or in pain, therefore rules require equipment to be used 'humanely'. **Humane care** is defined as handling of livestock that seeks to minimize distress.

Handling, sorting or other equipment used to move livestock must be used humanely. When restraint of livestock is required, it must be minimal in degree and duration, and it must minimize the potential for injury.

With regard to electric prods, only hand-held, 50 volt or less, battery-operated electric prods can be used to facilitate the movement of livestock. An electric prod can also be used as a diagnostic tool to determine whether an animal can rise on its own. Prods must be used humanely and cannot be used on swine that weigh less than 35 pounds. Prods cannot be used in sensitive areas (including the eyes, ears, nose, vulva, anus, udder or testicles) and cannot be used on non-ambulatory disabled livestock<sup>2</sup>.

## General Management Practices

Tusk trimming is an acceptable management procedure for use on swine. Tusk trimming must be performed in a humane manner and care must be taken to cut the tusks level with the gums without damaging the gums.

## Handling

Ohio's livestock care standards prohibit **anyone** who owns or has responsibility for or custody of livestock from maliciously or recklessly throwing, dropping, or dragging the animals. It is also not permissible use the tail or ears to pick an animal up or carry an animal, or to pull its legs into positions or in directions which might cause it to be injured or in pain.

If the animal's position does not permit lifting or another method of movement, however, it is permissible to drag an ambulatory disabled<sup>3</sup> or non-ambulatory disabled animal the **minimum distance** needed to allow movement by another method.

<sup>2</sup> Non-ambulatory disabled means livestock that cannot rise or walk.

<sup>3</sup> Ambulatory disabled livestock are livestock that are capable of walking, but have a physical impairment that severely limits or threatens their ability to walk.

## Health

In addition to appropriate labeled medication, prescription and extra-label medications are often necessary to ensure livestock health. The medication label instructions must also be followed:

- how and where to administer the medication
- the proper dosage of the medication
- how to store the medication
- how long the medication must be withdrawn prior to the use of the animal's meat for human consumption.

The livestock care rules require all prescription and extra-label use medication to be obtained and administered to livestock with the advice and consent of a licensed veterinarian.

As with equipment usage, all practices and procedures pertaining to the health and medical treatment of livestock must be performed so as to minimize distress. For this reason, livestock must also be monitored regularly for evidence of disease, injury and parasites. When evidence of any of these ailments is found, corrective measures must be taken. If required by the condition of the animal, a means of separating the sick animals from the healthy livestock must be available.



Extra-label drug use is the use of an approved drug in a manner that is not in accordance with its approved label. Extra-label drug use is only permitted under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian and in the context of a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship.

# Distressed or Disabled Livestock

An entire chapter of the Ohio livestock care standards is devoted to proper and humane care for animals that are **distressed** (injured, sick or in pain) or **disabled** (ability to move or walk is severely or completely hindered). Disabled livestock are defined as either **ambulatory** (meaning they have some ability to walk or move) or **non-ambulatory** (meaning walking or movement is not possible).

When an animal becomes disabled, treatment must be humane and relative to the ailment of the animal. If the disabled livestock can still move on its own (ambulatory), then the animal must continue to be monitored for needed treatment, transported for treatment or sale, transported to an inspected slaughter facility, legally slaughtered on the farm, or euthanized.

If the disabled animal still cannot move on its own (non-ambulatory), then the animal must be cared for and provided feed and water, provided necessary treatment, transported for treatment, transported to an inspected slaughter plant, legally slaughtered on the farm, or euthanized.

If, after receiving treatment and additional feed and care, an animal still looks to be emaciated, then it must be sent to market, transported to a slaughter facility, legally slaughtered on the farm, or euthanized.



If you have questions about how to have an animal released by authorization from the Department of Agriculture, call the Division of Animal Health at 614-728-6220.

Distressed, Disabled Livestock

If, at a non-terminal market or a collection facility, an animal becomes disabled and their condition does not allow for immediate sale, the animal(s) must either be released by authorization from the Department of Agriculture or euthanized. There is an exception to this rule for **fatigued swine**. **Fatigued swine** are swine that have temporarily lost the ability to walk but have a reasonable expectation to recover full locomotion once allowed time to rest. Fatigued swine may be allowed to rest for up to two hours to recover and may receive cooling or other treatments that do not leave any drug residues. If the animal does not recover within two hours, it must either be released by authorization from the Department of Agriculture or euthanized.

Proper and complete documentation of treatments, medication and medication withdrawal times is necessary when bringing any disabled animal to market. It is the responsibility of the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal (except for third-party transporters) to keep these records.

# Transportation

## Transportation

When transporting swine, the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal(s) is responsible for determining the load density. The transportation method used and the density of the load must minimize injury and must allow fallen animals to rise. Handling of animals during the loading, transport, and unloading process must be done humanely. Non-ambulatory disabled animals are **not permitted** to be loaded for transport to a non-terminal market or a collection facility. Additionally, if it is necessary to transport a sow with her suckling litter, the sow must be segregated from all other animals during transport and the litter must be protected appropriately.

Ramps, chutes and other means used for transportation must be constructed to provide adequate footing to minimize slips and falls. All swine animals must also be able to stand in their natural position without touching the top of the transport conveyance. Animals must be reasonably protected from adverse weather conditions.

If prolonged transit is necessary, transporters **must** stop every 28 hours to unload and provide animals with food, water and rest for at least five consecutive hours. There is an exception to this requirement if the transportation vehicle allows the livestock to lie down and rest and have access to feed and water. The transport driver is solely responsible for the welfare of the animals during transit and must have an emergency action plan.

# Euthanasia

Except in slaughter facilities already governed by federal or state law, the only acceptable methods of euthanasia for pigs weighing **more than 70 pounds** are the use of a penetrating captive bolt, a gunshot, or the use of injectable barbiturates. The only acceptable methods of euthanasia for pigs weighing **between 12 and 70 pounds** are the use of a penetrating captive bolt, a gunshot, the use of an inhaled carbon dioxide agent, or the use of injectable barbiturates. The only acceptable methods of euthanasia for pigs weighing **less than or equal to 12 pounds** are the use of a non-penetrating captive bolt, blunt force, the use of an inhaled carbon dioxide agent, or the use of injectable barbiturates. Electrocutation can also be used on swine weighing **10 pounds or more**. The methods are to be considered as sole methods for euthanasia; however, the rules do not preclude a licensed veterinarian from performing acceptable standards of veterinary practices.

If, in the course of employing one of these methods, humane death does not occur, the same method or another acceptable method must be performed immediately. Death is confirmed by the absence of a heartbeat or breathing for five minutes, and the animal's lack of a blink reflex when the eye is touched. As a standalone method, *Exsanguination* (to bleed an animal to death) can only be used for ritual slaughter. However, it can be used to ensure the death of an unconscious animal or following stunning.



These methods must be followed when euthanizing an animal, regardless of whether the animal will be slaughtered on the farm, or its carcass burned, buried, composted or rendered. Ohio's livestock care standards do not alter the current regulations regarding the disposal of animals after they are confirmed dead.

Euthanasia

## **Physical Methods**

The physical methods permitted for euthanizing swine produce a humane death through the rapid loss of consciousness, followed by cardiac and respiratory arrest, ultimately leading to the complete loss of brain function.

### **Penetrating captive bolt**

Captive bolt guns are powered by gunpowder or compressed air. In order to ensure humane death, gun must be held firmly against the head and must provide sufficient energy to penetrate the skull of the animal and cause a sudden loss of consciousness.

### **Non-penetrating captive bolt**

Non-penetrating captive bolt guns are powered by gunpowder or compressed air and do not have a projectile. In order to ensure humane death, the gun must be held firmly against the head to deliver a percussive blow which produces unconsciousness. Non-penetrating captive bolt guns can only be used as a primary method of euthanasia for pigs weighing less than or equal to 12 pounds.

### **Gunshot**

The rules require that the shooting take place in an area where legal firearm use is permitted and that the shooter be proficient in the use of firearms. The safety of the shooter, the public, and any nearby animal(s) must be taken into consideration when employing this method and the animal must be reasonably controlled whenever feasible.

Gunshot methods must utilize bullets of suitable caliber<sup>4</sup> depending on the size of the animal to be euthanized, and that expand on impact. The gun must be held as close as reasonably possible, but not less than 2 inches, from the head and the projectile must enter the brain at such an angle as to cause instant loss of consciousness and humane death.

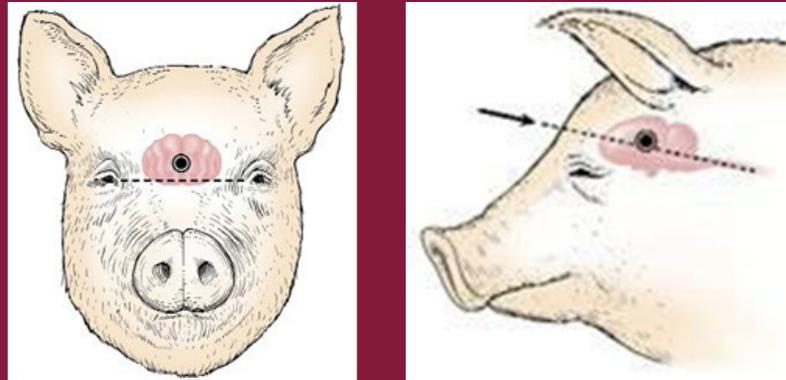
### **Blunt force**

Blunt force can only be used as a method of euthanasia for pigs weighing less than 12 pounds. In order to ensure humane death, a single decisive blow that produces immediate depression of the central nervous system and destruction of brain tissue resulting in rapid unconsciousness **must** be used.

<sup>4</sup> Ammunition for most animals must be a minimum caliber .22 hollow point long rifle. For large, mature swine animals, the minimum caliber must be .22 magnum hollow point long rifle.

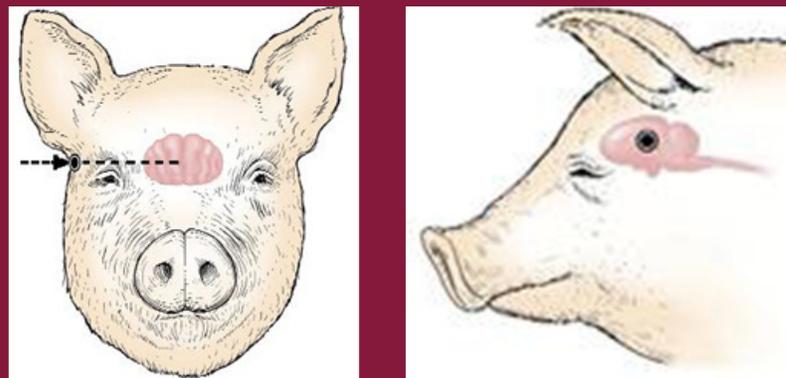
## Sites for physical methods

Ohio's livestock care standards permit two sites/entry angles when using a physical method to euthanize pigs. When performed from the front (see Figure 1), the gun or penetrating captive bolt must be directed at the middle of the head and 1 inch above the level of the eyes while aiming at the spine.



**Figure 1 – Frontal method**

When performed from the side (see Figure 2), the gun must be directed at a 90 degree angle to the side of the head at a point midway between the eye and the base of the ear.



**Figure 2 – Temporal (side) method**

## Chemical Methods

### Carbon-Dioxide

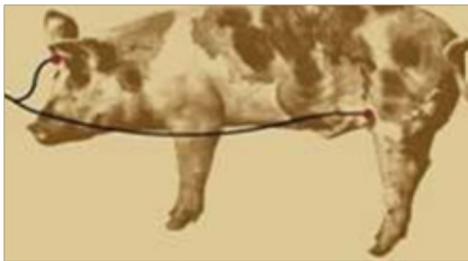
The only inhalant agent permitted to be used as a method of euthanasia is compressed carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) gas in cylinders. Furthermore, carbon dioxide is the only chemical allowed to be used for the euthanasia of animals intended for human or animal consumption. When using this method, gas concentration must be maintained for at least one minute after death. Carbon-dioxide can only be used on pigs weighing less than 70 pounds.

### Barbiturates

Ohio's livestock care standards require that all injectable agents used for euthanizing animals, including all barbiturate derivatives, must be used by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. It should be noted that barbiturates must not be used to euthanize an animal that will be used for human consumption.

## Electrocution

Electrocution may be used on pigs that weigh 10 pounds or more. There are two primary methods of electrocuting pigs. **One-step electrocution** must use alternating current that is applied to both the head and the opposite side of the body behind the heart at the flank skin fold (see Figure 3), causing simultaneous stunning and inducing cardiac fibrillation resulting in cerebral hypoxia. For this method, a minimum of 110 volts (that produces a minimum of 0.5 amps) is required for pigs weighing between 10 pounds and 35 pounds. For pigs weighing greater than 35 pounds, a minimum of 220 volts (that produces a minimum of 1.3 amps) is required.



**Figure 3 – One-step electrocution**

In **two-step stunning and electrocution** the animal is first rendered unconscious by passing an alternating current across the head and followed immediately, in less than 15 seconds, by passing the current from the head to the opposite side of the body behind the heart.

# Enforcement

Ohio's livestock care standards will be enforced by the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Divisions of Animal Health and Enforcement. Farms that are not currently subject to regular inspection will not be subject to any new regular inspections as a result of these rules. ODA staff will only inspect a farm if a credible complaint regarding violations of these rules is reported. Anonymous complaints will not be considered credible.

ODA staff will investigate credible complaints to determine if a violation has occurred. Violations affecting more than one animal **may** be considered as one offense. If a violation is found, the person who owns or has immediate custody of the animal(s) will be informed in person, or by telephone, fax, or email. If the notification is made in person or by telephone, written notification will also be sent within three days.

If the violation can be corrected, ODA staff will include the corrective measures which must be taken to achieve compliance with the rules, including the amount of time allowed to take any necessary corrective measures, in the written notice. If the responsible party fails to remedy the violation within the time specified in the written notice, they may be assessed a subsequent violation for each day the violation remains uncured.

## Minor Violations

The rules define two kinds of violations: minor and major. Minor violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are generally due to neglect or unintentional acts of substandard practices. Minor violations are finable up to \$500 for the first minor offense and up to \$1,000 for each subsequent minor offense that is committed within 60 months of the previous minor violation.

# Questions?

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**Ohio** | Department of  
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## Major Violations

Major violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are reckless or intentional acts which result in the unjustified infliction of pain. Major violations can be any action which:

- places an animal's life in imminent peril
- causes protracted disfigurement
- causes protracted impairment of health
- causes protracted loss or impairment of the function of a limb or bodily organ

Major violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are finable offenses with penalties ranging between \$1,000 and \$5,000 for the first major violation and \$5,000 to \$10,000 for each subsequent major violation that is committed within 60 months of the previous major violation.

If a major violation has occurred, ODA staff may also work with state and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations to provide care to the animal(s). This includes but is not limited to providing feed and water, providing medical care, taking possession of the animal(s), or euthanizing the animal.

## Additional Penalties

In addition to any fine assessed for a violation, ODA may also assess an additional fee to recover the cost to the department to investigate a matter. This fee is based on the average salary and the average cost of benefits of all employees who are directly involved in the investigation, copying costs, and any direct or indirect costs to ODA including all necessary laboratory analysis and the caretaking costs.

Anyone who has been issued a fine for violations of these rules will have 30 days to request a hearing to appeal the Department's decision. If requested, the hearing will be overseen by an independent hearing officer who is a licensed attorney and not an employee of ODA.

*This summary is for the convenience of those raising and handling livestock and is **not** intended to cover all laws and regulations. The Ohio Administrative Code contains the details of these regulations and is available for review at [www.ohiolivestockcarestandards.com](http://www.ohiolivestockcarestandards.com)*



If you have questions about how to comply with these rules or about the enforcement process, please call the ODA Division of Animal Health at (614) 728-6220 or visit the Department's website at [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov).