

# Animal welfare

Ensuring all animals receive appropriate care



August 2017

## Poultry at markets and saleyards

Codes of practice have been prescribed under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* to give guidance on the care expected for animals. The advice in this fact sheet is based on codes of practice and relevant guidelines. Failure to ensure animals are appropriately handled and transported may result in prosecution. For more information please see the department's animal welfare page ([www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare)) or contact the RSPCA (08 9209 9300).

To make an animal cruelty complaint please contact the RSPCA on 1300 278 3589.

**All animals at markets and saleyards must be fit for transport. Sick, injured or weak animals must not be transported except under the advice of a veterinary surgeon.**

Under Western Australian legislation it is illegal to sell or trade the meat of an animal you have butchered unless you operate a licenced abattoir. If you are a farmer, you are permitted to slaughter your own animal on your own property, but it can only be consumed by you, your family or your employees.

Animals must be treated humanely at all times. If you are unsure of the proper procedure for humanely killing poultry, advice should be sought from a poultry expert or veterinarian.

### Transport and handling

Poultry **must not** be held or transported in the **boot** of a car.

Poultry **must not** be held inside an enclosed **vehicle** in conditions where the **temperature** inside the vehicle **may exceed 30<sup>o</sup> C**. This can happen in less than 10 minutes on a 21<sup>o</sup>C day.

Suitable **covers must be used** to protect animals from excessively hot or cold conditions such as direct sunlight, winds or rain. Covers **must still allow** adequate **ventilation**.

Birds **must not** be transported with their **legs tied**.

Care **must be taken** in catching, handling and crating birds, to avoid injuring them.

Where poultry are sold at markets or saleyards they should be unloaded **without delay** and held in containers **with access to feed and water**.

### Transport container design

Containers **must prevent** the **protrusion** of any part of a bird through the container, to ensure it isn't trapped or injured during handling or transport. This is especially important for the **floor** of the container.

The number of birds per transport container depends on available floor space and body size of the birds. Containers should be **well ventilated** and large enough that **all birds are able to sit comfortably** on the floor at the **same time** (see minimum space recommendations on reverse).

Animals may only be carried in transport containers that are safe for the animals and **will not collapse** if the containers are to be stacked on top of each other.

Containers should be designed, monitored and managed so that birds are **not injured** when being placed in or taken out. Container **entrances** should be as **large as practically possible**.

There should be **no sharp edges or protrusions inside transport containers**.

### Important disclaimer

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## Chickens and ducks



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Chickens and ducks should be caught by placing hands on either side of the bird's wings to prevent flapping and injury. From here position the head of the bird towards your armpit and slide an arm under the bird, securely grasping both legs with a finger or two between them. Ducks may also be caught by grasping them at the base of the neck before transferring them to your free arm where their legs can be securely held as before. Do not lift any species of poultry by a single leg and never carry ducks by their legs.

## Geese



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Geese may be caught by gently grasping the upper neck to prevent them from biting the handler. After this wrap your other arm around the body of the goose and support its breast with your arm by keeping its neck beneath your armpit. Grasp both feet firmly with a finger or two between them and then lift the bird while holding the wings in place to prevent flapping.

Table 1 Minimum recommended space requirements for poultry

Class of poultry	Floor space
Poultry up to 1.6 kg	40 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
Poultry 1.6–2.2 kg	36 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
Poultry 2.2–3.0 kg	28 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
Poultry 3.0–5.0 kg	20 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
Turkeys 3.0–5.0 kg	25 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
Poultry more than 5.0 kg	100 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg
Adult pigeons	450 cm <sup>2</sup> /bird
Squabs	200 cm <sup>2</sup> /bird