



The transport of equines intended for slaughter:
challenges and recommendations for amending the
Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005



WorldHorseWelfare
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Key recommendations

Equines are transported for many different reasons and may be transported many times throughout their lives. Transportation to slaughter make up 42% of all intra-European Union movements of equines between Member States. Since the introduction of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 and the various EU guidance on the transport of live animals, there have been some improvements in the care of equines being transported. However, significant welfare hazards and concerns still remain.

Transportation can be a stressful and exhausting experience for equines, and it increases the risk of disease, injury (cutaneous, muscular, and skeletal), exhaustion and dehydration. Equine welfare during transport is impacted by multifactorial factors including the fitness and health of the equine, the preparation for the journey, the means of transport, the space allowance, the transport practices, the duration of the journey, the watering and feeding intervals and the feasibility of enforcing the rules established, among others.

In 2020, the European Commission launched the Farm to Fork Strategy, which aims to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly. This includes reviewing the whole EU Animal Welfare legislative framework – including Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve equine welfare during transport and reduce the negative outcomes of current rules.

World Horse Welfare promotes the equine-human partnership in all its guises through a combination of hands-on care, research, education and influence. Using a constructive approach and providing science-based evidence to support our views, we developed a list of key recommendations that should be considered when reviewing the Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005 in order to ensure it is effective and fit for purpose:

Journey times

- For both practical and ethical reasons, a separate category for equines transported for slaughter should be retained.
- A maximum, finite 12-hour journey limit should be established for equines intended for slaughter.
- There should be no further onward journey as the final destination should be the slaughterhouse.
- When equines intended for slaughter are located more than 12 hours' journey from a licensed equine slaughterhouse, Competent Authorities may recommend a derogation to extend the 12-hour journey limit, after performing a case-by-case analysis.
- It is essential to have a central database with all information on official registered abattoirs prepared to accept equines in case of emergency. This information should be made available to all operators.



Fit for transport

- The definition of 'fit for the intended journey' should include that the equine must be fit for the intended journey and arrive at their destination in a fit state. Specific criteria should be developed to allow fitness or lack of fitness to be easily identified.
- A practical risk assessment should be performed before each journey to assess the fitness of the individual equine in relation to the specific challenges that may be encountered during the journey, taking in to account the equine's physical and mental state. Only healthy and non-stressed animals that are able to cope with the intended journey should be loaded.

Vehicle specification

- All commercial movement of equines over 65km should be undertaken in type 2 authorised vehicles with a journey log.
- Industry approved standards are urgently required for vehicle design, particularly around safety and ventilation (including flooring, fans, temperature gauge and setting out a standard U-value for insulated roofs).

Space allowance and partitions

- The space allowance for equines should be 1.9m² per equine (compared to the current 1.75m²) and 1.2m² for young equines (from 6 to 24 months).
- The distance from flank to side/partition should be specified, with a minimum of 10 cm between each side of the animal and the partition or the side of the vehicle (i.e., 20 cm in total).
- That the space in front of the equine's nose and the space at their rear should be at least 15cm (i.e., 30cm in total, front and back). When a breast bar is used, there should be at least 30cm space between the breast bar and the chest of the equine.

Transporters

- Individual journey specific contingency plans should be made for each journey, and these must prioritise animal welfare and the main equine health and welfare hazards that the journey may present. A summary of the elements of a contingency plan should be required in the event of emergencies for long journey transporter authorisations.

Handling and driving

- All personnel, meaning anyone involved in the transportation and/or handling of equines such as drivers, handlers, riders, trainers, farriers, veterinarians, enforcement officers, control post personnel, and others likely to have contact with live equines during transport, should be trained on how to perform their tasks ensuring equine welfare is prioritised.
- Legislation should include specific competencies to be obtained by those who are involved in equine transportation.
- Competent Authorities should use strategies and technologies to monitor the welfare of equines during transport and its impact on equines post transport, as well as monitor driver's behaviour and its impact on equines during transport.



Ventilation and temperature

- Temperature, humidity and practical methods of cooling heat-stressed equines should be evaluated and included in transporters' contingency plans.
- The current requirement for forced ventilation system and temperature monitoring systems should be extended to all commercial journeys longer than 65km.

Watering and feeding

- Prior to the start of the journey, equines should have access to adequate forage and to an unrestricted and constant supply of clean drinking water for at least six hours before the start of the journey.
- On a 12-hour journey, short mid-journey rests should be given every 4 to 6 hours.

Areas where equine are loaded and unloaded

- Equines should be given constant and free access to forage and clean water on arrival and for the duration of their stay.
- Equines arriving at assembly centres and control posts should be able to rest. Space allowances should be sufficient to enable all equines to lie down to meet their needs for rest.

Enforcement

- All parties involved in the enforcement of the legislation should operate in a well-aligned, collaborative and unified way with access to real time information and integrated systems as far as possible.
- The EU needs to continue its move towards full digitisation and centralisation of equine ID and equine movements from premises of origin to assembly centres and control posts, to final destination to help facilitate the work of the enforcement agencies and provide improved traceability of equines.

General recommendations

- The scope of the legislation should be extended to include pre- and post-travel requirements, including access to forage and water both before and after the journey.

