

Small Ruminant Transportation Webinar Summary

On February 11th, 2021, Alberta Farm Animal Care, in partnership with Alberta Goat Association and Alberta Lamb Producers, hosted a webinar for small ruminant producers and stakeholders. The webinar featured Sarah Johannson with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) who presented amendments to Canada's humane transportation regulations. This document summarizes the webinar's content and the question-and-answer session that followed.

CFIA's Role in Animal Welfare

It is everyone's responsibility to protect animals' welfare in Canada, including the federal-provincial-territorial governments and the industry. The CFIA is responsible for the welfare of animals during transport and slaughter in federal establishments.

Amendments to the Humane Transport Regulations

The [*Health of Animals Regulations*](#) (HAR) - Part XII applies to the transportation of animals entering, within and leaving Canada. Compliance with the humane transport regulations is verified and is enforced by CFIA inspectors.

The intent of Part XII of the HAR is to minimize the suffering of animals involved in the process of transportation whether due to ignorance, negligence, lack of planning, improper use of equipment or improper handling.

The regulations were updated to reflect changes in transport infrastructure, the livestock industry, and consumer expectations. The amendments are a balance of evidence-based science, international standards and guidelines, public and industry feedback, and industry logistics and technology while also acknowledging Canada's geographical size and its impact. More information about the history and research of the amendments is available [here](#).

The new regulations acknowledge that animal transport is a complex process and approaches it with the goal of positive welfare outcomes through planning and preventing problems. The regulations aim to make those involved in transportation identify risks and plan out measures to avoid them.

The amendment is a combination of outcome-based and prescriptive provisions. Outcome-based provisions specify desired results and were designed to prevent the animals from suffering, becoming injured, or dying. Prescriptive-based provisions are specific to a standard or process.

The amendments came into effect on February 20th, 2020. Some amendments constitute a significant change to current industry practices for some sectors. The CFIA is working to ensure a clear understanding of the regulations, and provide transitional guidance and information.

The amendments to the HAR can be broken down into eight areas:

1. Feed, water, and rest (FWR)
2. Record keeping
3. Protection of animals – weather, ventilation, and noxious gases
4. Animal handling (including use of ramps, equipment)
5. Vulnerable animals (compromised and unfit, lactating, very young, pregnant animals)
6. Preventative measures (knowledge, training, assessment of animals, monitoring)
7. Vessels and air transport (not covered in this webinar)
8. Fully equipped vehicles (not covered in this webinar)

Knowledge

Transporting live animals is a complex process. Everyone involved in the transport of animals is required to have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of these regulations.

Information on the humane transportation of small ruminants can be found through the following resources and organizations:

- [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation](#)
- [Humane Handling Guidelines for Sheep](#)
- [Sheep and Goat Management in Alberta - Health](#)

Information about the regulation and how to comply with it

[Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals-Regulatory Amendment Interpretive Guidance for Regulated Parties](#)

Does Part XII HAR Apply to Me?

Humane transport is a shared responsibility. All persons involved in the transport of animals share responsibility under the law. Part XII of the HAR applies to all those involved directly or indirectly in the transport of live animals, including those who:

- Plan the transport,
- Prepare animals for the journey (including food and water withdrawal),
- Assemble animals,
- Catch animals,
- Load animals,
- Confine animals in a crate/container or conveyance,
- Move animals from a point of origin to their destination, and
- Unload animals from the conveyance or container at their final destination.

Who is a Commercial Carrier?

A commercial carrier is someone who is in the business of transporting animals, including those:

- Carriers who own vehicles and are hired to transport animals
- Owner-operators who contract an agent (employee) to transport animals.

Most producers will be "persons not considered commercial carriers but those who are transporting animals in the course of business or for financial benefit," such as:

- A producer transporting their own animals to an assembly yard
- A feedlot that transports animals to a sale
- A Hutterite colony delivering animals to slaughter.

Training

Commercial carriers are responsible for ensuring that their employees receive training. Options for training include:

- [Canadian Livestock Transport \(CLT\)](#)
- [Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization \(PAACO\) training \(for staff and auditors\)](#)
- [Mentorship](#)

Assessing Animals Before Transit

Transport events are stressful and can be challenging for animals. Producers have an important role in preventing problems during transit by assessing animals before transport to evaluate the transport related risk factors that are relevant for each animal. As a producer, you know your animals best, and that their condition can change over time. You are accountable to make decisions that don't pass problems further downstream.

Prevent problems during transit by assessing animals before and during all stages of transport. Before transit, the following should be assessed by the producer and transporter:

- The animal's capability to withstand the entire transport continuum (i.e., FWR withdrawal – loading – confinement – transport – unloading - FWR provided again or humanely slaughtered);
- Factors that could reasonably be viewed as likely to cause injury, suffering or death during transport; and
- The risks prior to loading, confining, transporting, or unloading animals.

Communication between the owner/producer and the driver/transporter is critical to provide the necessary FWR information and to identify risks that animals may face. During the assessment, one must consider the duration of the transport continuum, climate and anticipate delays (e.g., border crossings) to which the animal will be exposed.

For more information about assessing animals prior to transport, see the Interpretive guidance for regulated parties section : [6.0 Assessment of risk factors related to transport and monitoring requirements – HAR section 138.3](#) .

Contingency Planning

Contingency planning is needed, similar to on-farm safety programs, to prevent issues and to plan responses in the event of an issue. Those responsible for transporting animals must have preplanned procedures to be used in the event of an unforeseen transport event (e.g., an accident, inclement weather or traffic delays).

There is no strict way that contingency plans must be presented. Contingency plans should include instructions about what to do if an animal becomes compromised en route, including who is responsible for euthanizing an animal. Compliance will be evaluated by whether the plan was available and implemented.

To ensure contingency plan(s) are successful, it is important that:

- Everyone understands the goal (i.e., to prevent animal suffering, injury or death in transport);
- The regulated party accurately assesses a situation, decides what steps and tasks need to be executed;
- Plans are practical and realistic;
- There is a clear communication plan (including backup numbers if people cannot be reached);
- The plan is reviewed, up to date and practices on a regular basis.

The [ALERT Line](#) and the [Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers](#) are Alberta resources that may be considered when making contingency plans.

For more information see the Interpretive guidance for regulated parties section : [5.0 Contingency plans – HAR section 138.2](#) .

Monitoring en route

Monitoring en route was something that was being done before the amendments came into force but now is the law. Monitoring needs to be done at an appropriate frequency and when circumstances increase the risk to humane transport (e.g., abruptly stopping). If an animal is at risk, then monitoring will be needed more frequently.

Vulnerable Animals

The intent of the humane transport regulations is to protect animals from suffering, being injured, or dying during transport. Certain categories of animals are more vulnerable than others. Even if they are not assessed as unfit or compromised, they still require special care to travel.

In the small ruminant sector, the following are more vulnerable:

- Compromised and unfit animals
- Young animals (8 days or less, and older but young unweaned small ruminants)
- Cull animals
- Lactating cows

A compromised animal can only be transported directly to the nearest place where they can receive care or treatment, or be humanely killed, **which does not include an assembly centre (such as an auction mart)**. A compromised animal may be transported for a maximum of 12 hours before FWR must be provided. An animal is considered to be compromised if they show the following conditions:

- Bloating with no signs of discomfort;
- Acute frostbite;
- Blind in both eyes;
- Not fully healed after a procedure;
- Lameness other than what would be described as unfit;
- Has a deformity or fully healed amputation;
- Is in a period of peak lactation;
- Unhealed or acutely injured penis;
- Minor rectal or minor vaginal prolapse;
- Mobility limited by a device on the body (e.g., hobbles);
- Wet bird; or
- Has any other signs of infirmity, illness, injury or condition that indicates an animal has reduced capacity to withstand transport.

Loading and transporting a compromised animal must be done with care to minimize suffering. To accomplish this, it is recommended that compromised animals:

- Are isolated;
- Are loaded individually without having to negotiate ramps within the conveyance; and
- Are subject to additional measures to prevent transport related suffering, injury or death (e.g., pain mitigation as applicable, extra bedding)

An animal is considered to be unfit if they show the following conditions:

- is non-ambulatory;
- has a fracture that impedes its mobility or causes it to exhibit signs of pain or suffering;
- is lame in one or more limbs to the extent that it exhibits signs of pain or suffering and halted movements or a reluctance to walk;
- is lame to the extent that it cannot walk on all of its legs;
- is in shock or is dying;
- has a prolapsed uterus or a severe rectal or severe vaginal prolapse;
- exhibits signs of a generalized nervous system disorder;
- is a porcine that is trembling, has difficulty breathing and has discoloured skin;
- has laboured breathing;
- has a severe open wound or a severe laceration;

- has sustained an injury and is hobbled to aid in treatment;
- is extremely thin;
- exhibits signs of dehydration;
- exhibits signs of hypothermia or hyperthermia;
- exhibits signs of a fever;
- has a hernia that
 - o impedes its movement, including when a hind limb of the animal touches the hernia as the animal is walking,
 - o causes the animal to exhibit signs of pain or suffering,
 - o touches the ground when the animal is standing in its natural position, or
 - o has an open wound, ulceration or obvious infection;
- is in the last 10% of its gestation period or has given birth during the preceding 48 hours;
- has an unhealed or infected navel;
- has a gangrenous udder;
- has severe squamous cell carcinoma of the eye;
- is bloated to the extent that it exhibits signs of discomfort or weakness;
- exhibits signs of exhaustion; or
- exhibits any other signs of infirmity, illness, injury or of a condition that indicates that it cannot be transported without suffering.

An unfit animal can only be transported to a place where it can receive vet care, and the following is met:

- A vet has recommended it;
- It is transported directly to this place; and
- This place is not a slaughter establishment or an assembly centre

An unfit animal must be individually loaded/unloaded, isolated from others during transport, and not be made to climb interior ramps. Measures must be taken to prevent suffering, injury or death during transport.

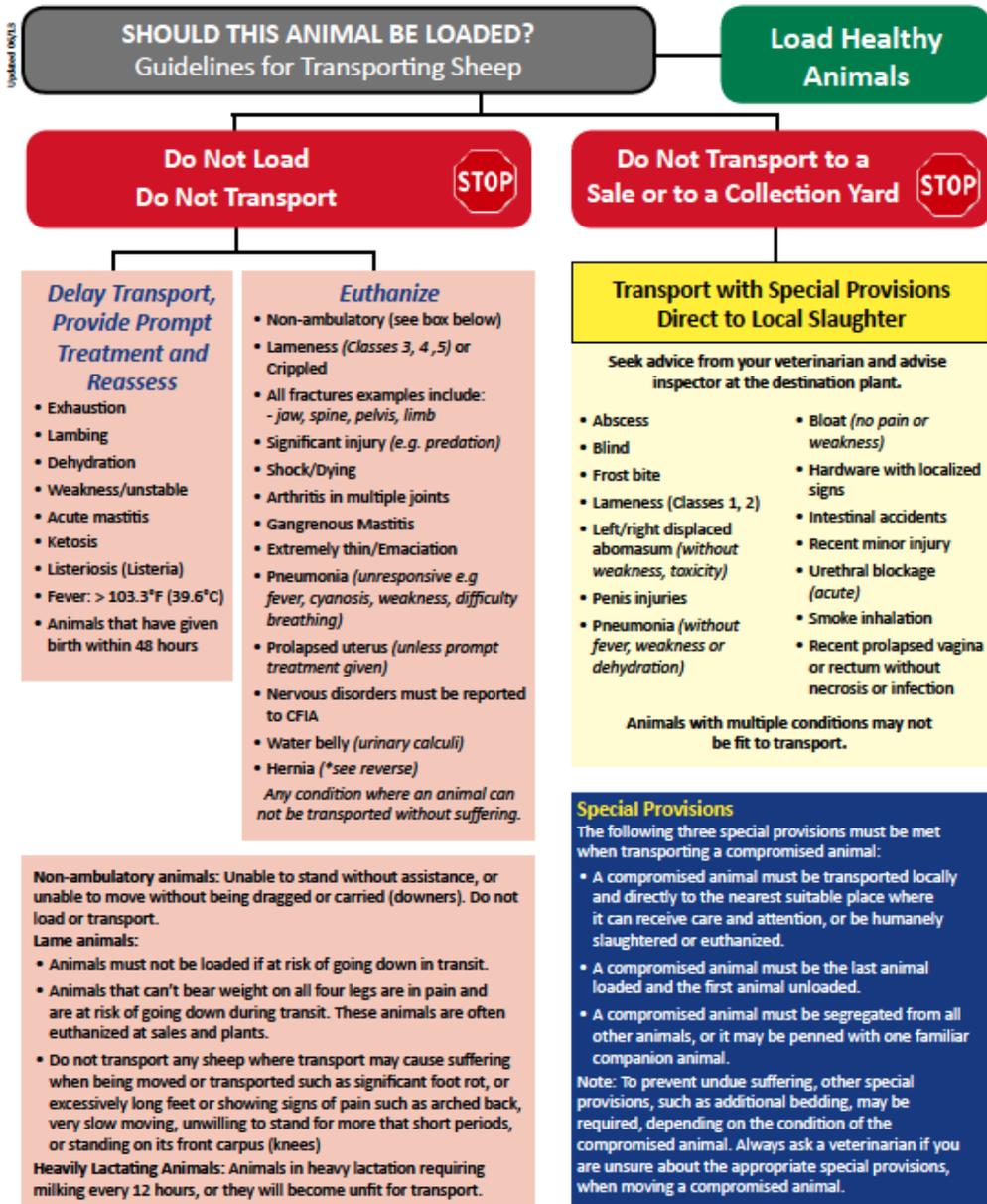
[Section 136](#) of the HAR includes lists of conditions that define an animal as unfit and compromised. [Sections 139](#) and [140](#) describe what can happen with these animals.

It is not always easy to make the call if an animal is fit for transport. To assist with this decision, the CFIA has developed an [Interpretive Guidance \(IG\) for industry](#) and an [infographic on assessing animals prior to transport](#).

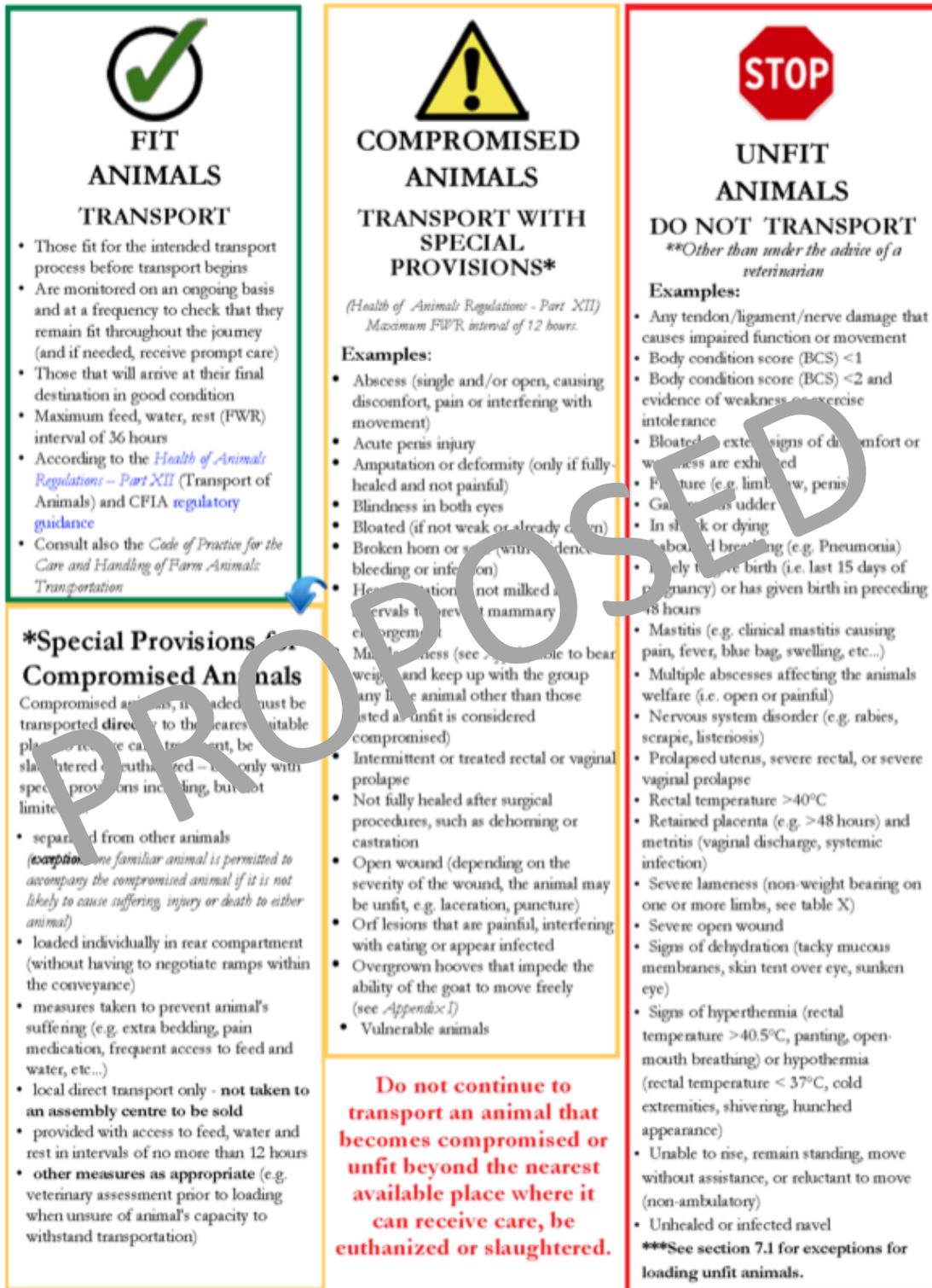
Humane transport guidelines and decision trees have also been developed by the industry (the sheep code decision tree is currently being updated to align with the amended HT regulations).



Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Sheep



Transport Decision Tree



Source: Adapted from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013): Available at <https://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle>

Lactating Animals

If lactating, an animal must be milked at intervals that prevent mammary engorgement throughout the transport continuum, or be transported with her suckling offspring. The concern with mammary engorgement is that it may cause discomfort and/or pain and may increase the risk of mastitis. If in a period of peak lactation (or heavy lactation) and will not be milked to prevent engorgement, or it is not known if she will be milked, the animal is considered compromised and must be transported as such (max FWR interval of 12 hours).

Young Ruminants (8 days of age or less, and those too young to be fed exclusively on hay or grain)

Young ruminants, eight days of age or younger, may not be transported for longer than 12 hours (between loading and unloading) in a single period. FWR (milk/milk replacer, provided in a manner that the animal is familiar with and able to drink) must be provided within 12 hours after the last time the animal was last provided. These young animals cannot go to an assembly centre, including an auction market.

Ruminants that are nine days or older but too young to be fed exclusively on hay and grain cannot be transported for longer than 12 hours (between loading and unloading). These young animals can go to an auction market for sale, however, require a rest/recovery period before beginning a second leg of transport. They cannot go more than 12 hours without FWR.

Animal Handling

The handling of animals, and containers of animals, must be done in a manner that does not lead to harm. Equipment, such as ramps, must be designed, constructed and maintained for the species and have good footing for the animals. Ramps for small ruminants must not exceed 35°.

Animals must not be handled in a way that causes suffering, injury or death. Beating, kicking, whipping, and dragging an animal is not acceptable. Prods cannot be used on small ruminants.

Protection of Animals during Transport

Animals must be protected from the weather, provided ventilation, prevent overcrowding and exposure to toxic substances like gases (e.g., vehicle exhaust). Conveyances must be suitable (designed, constructed, equipped, and maintained) for the species being transported.

Space during transport must be enough to avoid injury due to overcrowding. Animals must have enough space and headroom to allow normal head movements, enough for the animals to maintain a preferred position with all feet on the floor, and without any part of its body coming in contact with a deck, roof, or top (i.e., hog tying their legs and transporting them in the trunk or back of a vehicle is not acceptable). Keep in mind that many loading density charts are made for standing room, and the amount of wool growth must be considered.

Conveyances must also have appropriate bedding to absorb waste, add comfort, and serve as insulation in the winter. Finally, incompatible animals should be kept separate from one another.

Required Humane Transport Documentation

Commercial carriers and those who transport animals in the course of business must keep records to allow for information gathering in the event of a problem. Transporters are responsible for the following documents:

- Animal transport records (NOTE: Animal transport records are not required for the movement of animals for routine animal husbandry or management between land locations on a property where no transfer of stewardship takes place)
- Transfer of care documents (if going to an abattoir or assembly centre, including an auction market)

The format of the animal transport record is not prescribed. A party can choose how they present the record, but it must include the following:

- The name and address of the producer or shipper, the receiver, driver, and the transport company (if applicable)
- Conveyance information, including the licence/registration number
- the date and place that the conveyance was last cleaned and disinfected
- Date, time, and place where the animals were loaded
- Number, description, and weight of the animals
- Available space to the animals (square metres or square feet of floor area);
- Date and time animals last had FWR

The transfer of care (TOC) document is needed when animals are left at any slaughter facility or assembly centre (including auction markets). The TOC shows who is responsible for the care of animals at all times. In the event of an issue, it is a chance to document what happened, show what was done, and the steps taken for the animal's welfare. The TOC does not need to be recorded in a special format. It can be in an electronic format (e.g., email or text), so long as the transporter is able to get acknowledgement from the receiver about the transfer of care.

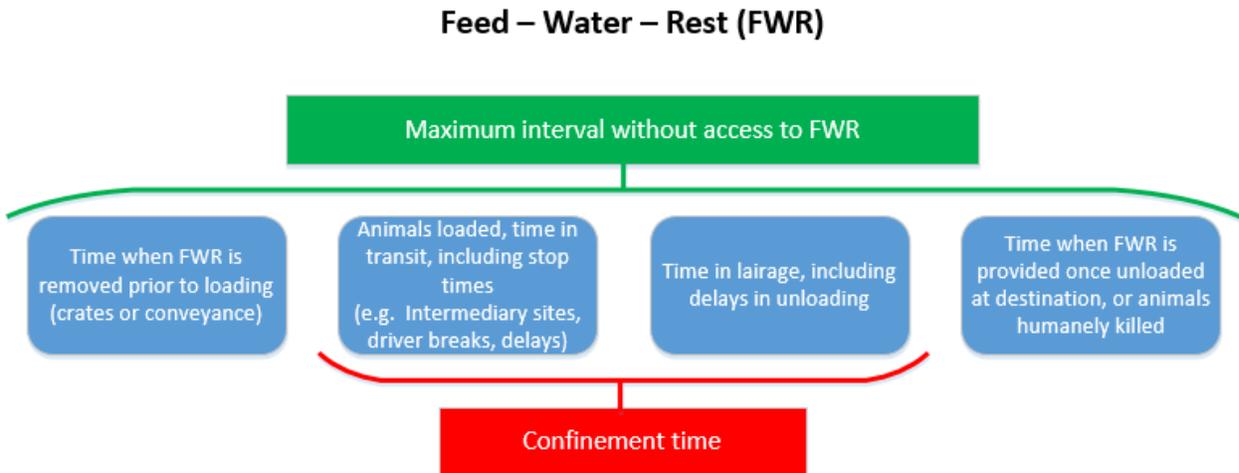
The animal transport record must be kept for two years by the transporter; it is recommended the TOC be kept for two years too (both transporter and receiver).

The TOC must include the following:

- The date and time the animal arrived at the slaughter establishment or assembly centre
- The condition of the animals on arrival – any comment you have about the load
- Date, time, and where the animals were last fed, watered and rested

Feed, Water, and Rest

The amendments include maximum allowed intervals without FWR. The interval without access to FWR differs from the time the animal is confined for transport. The interval begins when one element (feed, water, or rest) is not available to the animal and ends when FWR are returned.



The FWR regulations are both outcome-based and prescriptive. The targeted outcome is that:

- Feed of an appropriate type for its species, age and condition and in amounts that are sufficient to prevent a nutritional deficit;
- Safe water in amounts that are sufficient to prevent the animal from becoming dehydrated; and
- Rest that is appropriate for its species, age and condition to prevent the animal from suffering from exhaustion.

These outcomes must be kept in mind when transporting animals under different conditions. For example, on a hot day, you are expected to do things differently to prevent the animal from becoming dehydrated and overheated, as opposed to a cool day.

The prescriptive component of the FWR regulations specifies the period without access to FWR for specific species, ages, and conditions, described below:

- Compromised animals: 12 hours
- Broiler chickens, spent laying hens and rabbits: 24 hours for safe water; 28 hours for feed
- Equines and porcine: 28 hours
- **All other animals: 36 hours**
- Newly hatched poultry: 72 hours after the time of hatching
- Young animals: 12 hours*

*Animals 8 days of age or less (only 1 transport allowed), and ruminants 9 days of age and older that are too young to be fed exclusively on hay and grain.

Maximum Intervals without Feed, Water, Rest

Animal Condition	Maximum Time Interval
Adult – fit for transport	36 hours before FWR
Compromised animals	12 hours before FWR
Animals too young to be fed (only) hay or grain	12 hours before FWR
Animals less than 8 days	12 hours only

As the industry adapts to the new regulations' FWR maximum intervals, the CFIA will focus its activities on compliance promotion through education and awareness activities for the first two years. This grace period (ending February 20, 2022) only applies to the prescribed maximum FWR times and animals must still arrive at their destination in good shape, hydrated and with no nutritional deficit. The CFIA will consider the animal's well-being for any non-compliance under the HAR and focus on the new outcome-based provisions.

Accountability for Humane Transport

The outcome of transportation will depend on the actions of all parties involved in the transport continuum (producer, transporters, assembly staff, slaughter establishment staff). Instances that are investigated will examine the role of everyone involved and the parts that they played. Decisions to enforce the regulations generally are made with the animal in mind. They consider what the party did, or failed to do, to protect animal welfare. The amended HT regulation makes it clear that **all** those involved in any part of transport, including planning and pre-transport assessment, are accountable for their actions.

Control and Enforcement Options

CFIA's intent is for everyone to do the right thing and encourage best practices through education and awareness. Very rarely do violations of the HAR end up in court. Proceedings with respect to a violation may not be commenced later than six months after the violation.

Control and enforcement options in response to a violation include:

- Seizure and detention;
- Requiring that an animal be sent to another location in order to proceed to a humane transport inspection to evaluate the compliance to the HAR;
- Ordering unfit/compromised animals to be transported to a specific place, in a specific manner, and under specific conditions to receive care or be humanely killed;
- Ordering removal from Canada;
- Notice of violation (warning);
- Notice of violation (penalty); and/or
- Prosecution.

Where to Find More Information

More information can be found on the [CFIA Humane Transport and Animal Welfare website](#).

Within this website, the following can be accessed:

- [Amended Part XII of the HAR](#)
- [Livestock Transport Brochure](#)
- [NFACC Codes of Practice](#)
- [Interpretive Guidance \(IG\) for industry](#)

Questions for CFIA may be emailed at cfia.animaltransport-transportdesanimaux.acia@canada.ca