



Meat Hygiene Unit
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SAFE MEAT TRANSPORT

The *Primary Produce (Food Safety Schemes) (Meat Industry) Regulations 2006* requires that all accredited operators transporting meat and meat products for human consumption comply with the ***Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption***.

Under the *Australian Standard* the maximum *surface* temperature of carcasses is 7°C and the maximum *internal* temperature of pieces of meat (smaller than a quarter) and processed meat products is 5°C.

These temperatures apply at load out and during transport, all the way until received by the retailer or further processor.

Refrigerated transport is not designed to reduce the temperature of product, only to maintain the temperature during transport. Trucks generally don't have the refrigeration capacity to reduce meat temperatures. Thus meat must be loaded and dispatched at 7°C for carcasses or 5°C for meat products.

These temperatures relate to the preferred living conditions of bacteria. Different bugs like different conditions, but the main ones that cause food poisoning generally do not grow at or below these temperatures.

So, keeping the meat at or below these temperatures and keeping it clean, will fulfil your responsibilities and limit your risk of liability.

All meat processors (including retailers) are required to record the temperature of the meat at load out, as well as the temperature at which it is received. Temperature of product, or at the very minimum, temperature of the transport environment, should also be monitored and recorded during shipment so that the operator is able to demonstrate compliance and due diligence whilst they are responsible for the product.

Suggestions for Safe Meat Transport

- ◆ Make sure the meat carrying compartment of the vehicle is capable of maintaining the required temperature of the meat during the journey. Refrigeration units should be serviced regularly.
- ◆ Cold air loss is one of the main causes of rising product temperature. The usual culprits are doors open too long, seals (check and replace), poor closure (repair damaged hinges and seals), cracked floors and ceilings (repair), draining holes (plug them until needed).
- ◆ Clean out and air dry the truck daily. You wouldn't put tonight's lamb roast on yesterday's dirty dinner plates. The same goes for raw meat.
- ◆ Make sure caps and clothing are clean and that you understand the benefits of personal hygiene. Drivers should wash their hands before loading and after delivery. You're always under the scrutiny of the general public.
- ◆ Closing the truck doors as much as possible and plastic curtains (regularly cleaned) help reduce cold air loss. The refrigeration compartment should be pre chilled prior to loading.

In Conclusion

The Australian Standard stipulates that all meat transport vehicles must be refrigerated, and that they must be capable of maintaining the temperature at 5°C for meat products or 7°C for carcasses.

The key to transporting meat safely and legally is to keep it cold and keep it clean.

Anyone operating a meat transport vehicle is required to operate and maintain a HACCP based food safety program. This includes daily checks on the cleanliness of the vehicle and monitoring the temperature of the vehicle during transport.

Further Information

Further information on the safe transporting of meat and meat products for human consumption can be obtained by contacting the Manager, Regulatory Services, Peter Dean on 8207 7868 or mobile 0418 828 650 or the Senior Quality Officer, Geoff West on 8207 7867 or mobile 0419 81 0 715.