

Technical Note No 22

Transport of Farmed Fish

Summary

The EU Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations came into force on 5 January 2007. The Regulation applies to all those who transport farmed fish as part of a business or trade. The Regulation sets out the general conditions for the transport of all vertebrate species, and outlines the specific provisions for the transport of farmed fish. The requirements also vary according to the length of journey. The documentation required for journeys under and over 65 km are discussed. Drivers and attendants transporting farmed fish on journeys over 65 km require a certificate of competence issued by an independent assessor.

All those involved in the transport of farmed fish, and related operations, need to be familiar with the requirements of the new Regulation.

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Introduction

This leaflet provides guidance on the EU Council Regulation on the protection of farmed fish during transport and related operations, and on the implementing national legislation for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (the regulation does not apply to wild caught fish). The Regulation came into force on 5 January 2007.

The Regulation covers the transport of all live vertebrate animals within the EU where the journey is in connection with an economic activity. Crustaceans, cephalopods and molluscs are covered by the general welfare in transport provisions protecting non-vertebrates from injury or unnecessary suffering. The Regulation does not provide a definition of economic activity but the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has interpreted it to mean that if you transport animals as part of a business or trade then the Regulation's provisions will apply.

Requirements of the Regulation

There are no specific requirements for the transport of fish but the following provisions of the Regulation apply to all vertebrate species:

Protection during transport

Anyone engaged in the handling and transport of fish must be trained or competent to do so in a way that does not, or is not likely to, cause unnecessary fear, injury or suffering. All necessary arrangements should be made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet the fishes' needs during the journey. Fish must be fit to undertake the journey.

Means of transport

The means of transport/container used must be designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering, and ensure the safety of the fish. This includes requirements for cleaning and disinfecting, and the provision of adequate lighting. The transport/container must provide protection from extreme temperatures. If the fish are transported in a container which is not permanently attached to the vehicle, this must be marked indicating the carriage of live animals and showing how it must be carried. The container must be kept upright and protected from severe jolts or shaking.

Space allowances

Sufficient space must be provided for the fish appropriate to their intended journey.

Duties of transporters

The welfare of the fish must not be compromised by insufficient coordination of the different parts of the journey, and weather conditions must be taken into account.

Feed, water and rest periods

Feed must be offered to the fish at suitable intervals and must be appropriate in quality and quantity with regard to the species and size. However, the requirements for the provision of water and rest periods for other vertebrates clearly do not apply to fish, but the water may need to be changed, if appropriate (but only at an approved water changing station).

Treatment of sick animals

If fish fall ill, or are injured during transportation, action should be taken to prevent further suffering. They should either be given appropriate veterinary treatment as soon as possible or, if treatment is inappropriate, undergo emergency slaughter or killing in a way that does not cause them any unnecessary suffering.

Transport distance

The requirements also vary according to the length of journey. Anyone transporting animals on any length of journey must ensure that the animals are fit to travel and will remain in a fit state throughout the journey. The means of transport and transport practices must comply with the requirements of the Regulation. All animals must be accompanied by an **Animal Transport Certificate (ATC)** which must contain information on:

- origin and ownership of the animals
- place of departure and destination
- date and time of departure
- expected duration of the journey

There is no prescribed format for an ATC. Provided the above points are met, the information does not have to be on a single piece of paper.

Farmers transporting their own animals, in their own vehicles, less than 50km need only comply with the general conditions set out in Article 3 of the Regulation.

For fish transported over 65km, in addition to the above requirements, the transporter must hold a valid **Transporter Authorisation** (see Figure 1) which in Great Britain is issued by Animal Health (formerly the State Veterinary Service)*. To obtain an authorisation the transporter must:

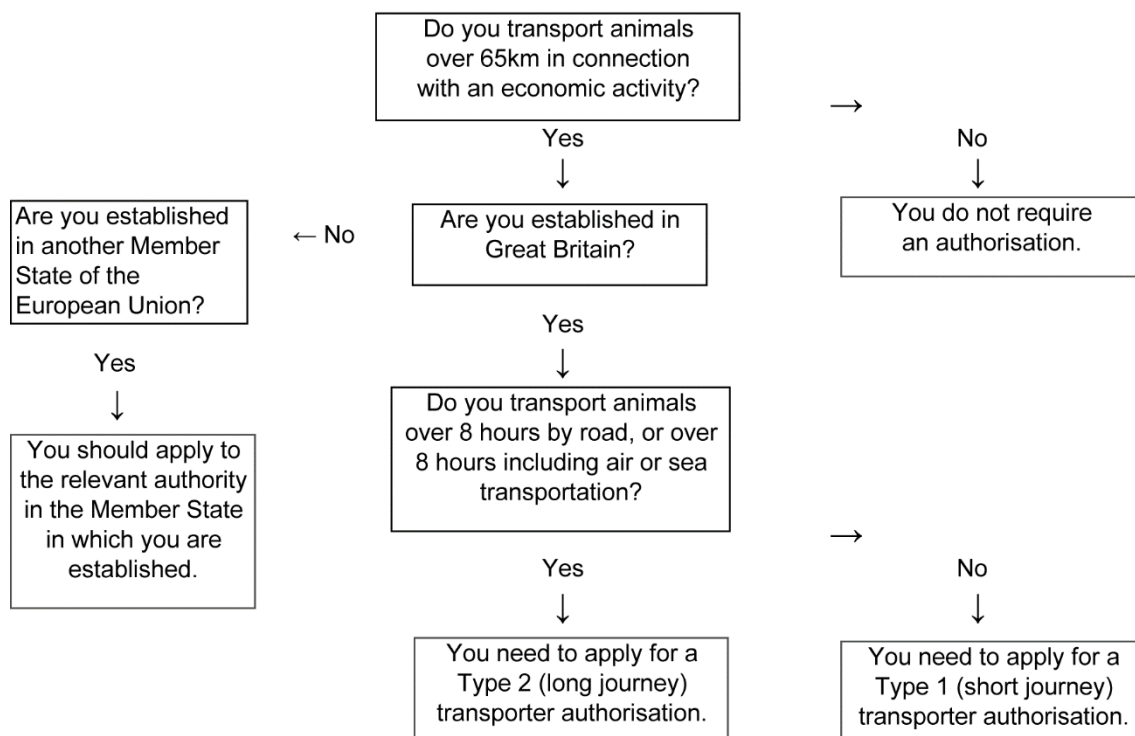
- be established in Great Britain
- have the appropriate equipment and operational procedures in place
- ensure that all staff involved in transporting fish are trained and competent
- ensure anyone involved in the transport of animals has not been convicted of a serious animal welfare offence in the three years preceding the submission of an application for authorisation

* If you are based in Northern Ireland you should apply to the NI Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Anyone requiring an authorisation needs to submit an application to the relevant authority. The authorisations are valid for five years unless revoked or suspended. Conditions may be imposed upon the authorisation at any time within this period if there are infringements of any requirement of the Regulation, or the relevant Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order/Regulation.

Figure 1
Flow Chart 1

Do I need a transport authorisation?



Source: Defra

Exemptions to general requirements for vertebrates

For fish on journeys of over 65km there is no requirement for drivers and/or attendants to hold a valid Certificate of Competence, as required for the transportation of other vertebrates.

The UK competent authorities have concluded that vehicles carrying animals in free standing, or permanently/temporarily secured, containers do not require **Vehicle Approval Certificates**. Therefore, road vehicles that carry farmed fish in containers are not required to be inspected and certified. Other means of transporting fish (eg well-boats, helicopters), are also exempt from the requirement to be inspected and certified.

In the future it is possible more specific conditions for transporting fish may be introduced. These might cover areas such as loading, transport management, space allowances, water temperature, oxygen availability and recovery after transport. However, these could only be introduced through a formal proposal by the EU Commission to the Member States, and stakeholders would be consulted before detailed rules were introduced.

Training and Certificate of Competence

The Regulation requires that transporters and attendants transporting farmed fish by road on journeys over 65km in connection with an economic activity, must be independently assessed as to their competence and, if successful, awarded a certificate of competence.

The precise format and who may provide training is not specified in the Regulation. Training may be by means of 'on-the-job' training combined with practical experience or by formal methods such as those leading to standards equivalent to qualifications accredited to National Qualifications Framework at levels 2 and 3.

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Further Reading

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005, of 22 December 2004, Official Journal of the European Union, 5/1/005.

Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 3260, *The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006*

The Stationery Office Ltd, ISBN 0110754379.

Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 606, *The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Order 2006*

The Stationery Office Ltd, ISBN 0110714288

Statutory Rule 2006 No. 538, *The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006*

The Stationery Office Ltd, ISBN 0337967873

Statutory Rule 2007 No. 32, *The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007*

The Stationery Office Ltd, ISBN 9780337968181

Welsh Statutory Instrument 2007, No. 1047, *The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007*

The Stationery Office Ltd., ISBN 9780110915678

Guidance Notes, *Welfare of Animals During Transport*
Defra 2006