

## Code of Practice for the Slaughter and Poultry Processing Industries

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### Q. Who does this Code of Practice apply to?

A. This Code applies to operators that slaughter and sell poultry or red meat for human consumption **and** have a waste discharge to the environment. Examples of waste discharges to the environment are disposing of wastewater via a drain/tile field or burying solid waste in an on-site landfill. Do not register under this Code if wastewater is discharged to a municipal sewerage system or if solid waste is picked up by a rendering company: these actions are not considered discharges to the environment.

#### Q. What if I already have a permit authorizing my waste discharges?

A. You may keep your permit and continue doing business as usual or you may opt to cancel your permit and register under the Code. There is no mandate requiring you to cancel a waste discharge permit and register under a Code of Practice.

### Introduction

If you operate a slaughterhouse, whether for red meat or poultry, you produce liquid waste: wash water from processing, clean-up and hand-wash stations, as well as domestic sewage from washrooms located in the slaughterhouse. This liquid waste can contain blood, fats, oils, grease, micro-organisms, cleaners and other substances and must be disposed of in a way that does not harm the environment.

The discharge of liquid waste from slaughterhouses into the environment is

regulated by the **Code of Practice for the Slaughter and Poultry Processing Industries** (Code) under the Waste Discharge Regulation of the *Environmental Management Act*. You can download a copy of the Code as well as access background information by following this link: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/codes/slaughter/index.htm>.

This guidance document is intended to assist slaughterhouse operators in understanding the requirements under the Code. For legal purposes, the *Environmental Management Act*, Waste Discharge Regulation and the Code shall prevail. Other provincial and federal legislation, guidelines and best management practices that are not described in this document may also apply to slaughterhouse operations. For example, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has regulations for the handling of specified risk material that producers, transporters and processors must follow. See their website at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/bseesb/enhren/enhrene.shtml>. Also, the Agricultural Land Commission has an information bulletin on the handling of red meat waste within the Agricultural Land Reserve. For further information see their bulletin at: [http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Information%20Bulletins/Red\\_Meat\\_Waste\\_info\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Information%20Bulletins/Red_Meat_Waste_info_sheet.pdf).

If you slaughter livestock or poultry strictly for your **personal consumption**, you are exempt from the provisions of the Code and do not need to register. You are still required to ensure that your activities do not harm the environment. The Code distinguishes between two types of slaughter facilities, category A (small facility),

and category B (larger facility). Details on these types are as follows:

1. If you slaughter *less than 60 tonnes* live weight of red meat livestock (approx. 100 beef) or *less than 40 tonnes* live weight of poultry per year (approx. 18,800 broiler chickens), **and** discharge *less than 5 cubic meters* (approx. 1100 Imp. gallons) of liquid waste per slaughter day, you operate a **Category A** slaughterhouse.
2. If you slaughter *60 tonnes or more* live weight of red meat livestock or *40 tonnes or more* live weight of poultry per year, **or** discharge *5 or more cubic meters* of liquid waste per slaughter day, you operate a **Category B** slaughterhouse.

**Docking stations for mobile slaughterhouses**

will fall into one of the above two categories. The owner of the land **where the waste discharge to the environment occurs** is required to obtain the waste discharge authorization (e.g., permit, registration under a code), not the mobile operator.

**General Registration and Recording Requirements for Slaughterhouses**

All slaughterhouses with a discharge to the environment, except for those slaughtering strictly for the personal consumption of the operator, must:

Register with the Ministry of Environment (MOE). Registration forms will be available online via the following website link: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/codes/slaughter/index.htm>. Forms can be printed off, completed and sent in by registered mail, courier or fax, or obtained from the Regional MOE office and returned to MOE headquarters in Victoria together with payment of the annual fee.

- Record how many tonnes of live weight of livestock or poultry are slaughtered per year. (If you are unable to weigh live

animals, you can estimate live weight from carcass weight using Table 1.)

Table 1 Carcass Weights as Percentage of Live Weight	
Species	Carcass Weight
Cattle and Bison under 30 months	50 % of live weight
Cattle and Bison over 30 months	40 % of live weight
Hogs	55 % of live weight
Sheep and Goats	60 % of live weight
Poultry	74% of live weight

*Van Kleeck, R., Investment Agriculture Foundation, 2006*

- Record the maximum amount of liquid waste discharged to the environment from the slaughterhouse in cubic meters per slaughter day. **Note:** discharge of liquid waste into a municipal sewerage system is not considered a “discharge to the environment” and you are not required to register for that liquid waste.
- Record how the liquid or solid waste will be disposed of (e.g., tile field, or landfill). **Note:** if the solid waste is picked up e.g., by a rendering company, this is not considered a “discharge to the environment” and you are not required to register for that solid waste.
- Prepare plans that may be required under this Code, e.g., nutrient management plan, groundwater monitoring and assessment plan, vector control plan or landfill closure plan.
- Keep records for at least 10 years and make them available to an officer within two days of a request.
- Notify a director in writing within 30 days after there is any change in information provided in your registration.

## Requirements for both Category A and B Slaughterhouses

Both **category A and B** slaughterhouses must:

- Ensure that no liquid waste is discharged directly into groundwater or into a watercourse. For the purposes of the Code, a watercourse is defined as any area that has surface water at any time of the year. This includes rivers, streams, springs and lakes, but also swamps and marshes, ravines, creeks and ponds that dry out in the summer, and any drainage ditches leading into them.
- Ensure that liquid waste used for irrigation is not applied to land growing crops for human consumption.
- Control dust and odour from the slaughterhouse.

Both **category A and B** slaughterhouses **may** discharge wastewater containing domestic sewage i) into the subsurface of the ground if:

- the domestic sewage source is from the slaughter facility,
- the discharge does not surface or cause the groundwater table to be raised to the surface,
- the person inspects the site to ensure the discharge has not surfaced, and
- the subsurface disposal system is designed by a Qualified Professional and installed according to that design.

or ii) onto the surface of the ground if:

- the domestic sewage source is from the slaughter facility, and
- section 8 (1 through 4) are complied with.

## Requirements for Category B Slaughterhouses only

**Category B** slaughterhouses must additionally meet the requirements described in the following sections for either **subsurface discharge** into a drain field (often called a septic system or tile field) or **irrigation**, depending on which method they use to dispose of their liquid waste.

### Subsurface Discharge

Category B slaughterhouses that dispose of their liquid waste by subsurface discharge must:

- Ensure that the drain field (septic system, tile field) is operating correctly at all times. Signs that a drain field is not operating correctly could include water rising to the surface, odour, septic tank backing up, etc.
- All correctly operating drain fields (septic systems, tile fields) constructed before September 30, 2007, and receiving liquid waste discharge are deemed to be authorized if registered under the Code.
- Any drain fields (septic systems, tile fields) constructed after September 30, 2007, must be designed by a Qualified Professional and installed according to that design.

### A Qualified Professional is a person who:

1. is registered in British Columbia with a professional organization, is acting under that organization's code of ethics, and is subject to disciplinary action by that organization, and
2. through suitable education, experience, accreditation and knowledge may reasonably be relied upon to provide advice within his or her area of expertise. That area of expertise must be applicable to the duty or function to be performed.

Two examples of organizations which meet the Code's definition of Qualified Professional are the BC Institute of Agrologists, <http://bcia.com/index.php> and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC, <http://www.apeg.bc.ca/members/dirsearch.html>.

### Irrigation Requirements

Slaughterhouse liquid waste can be used for irrigation, as long as it is not applied to land growing crops for human consumption, and certain requirements are met.

Slaughterhouse operators who are also **farmers** can use their slaughterhouse liquid waste for irrigation without further requirements as long as:

- The total discharge volume does not exceed 100 cubic meters (approx. 100,000 litres or 22,000 Imp. gallons) per year.
- It is applied at agronomic rates. This means that no more nutrients are applied to the land than can be used by the plants growing on it, so that surplus nutrients are not leached into water systems.

For the purposes of the Code, a farmer is a person who operates a farm on land classified as farmland under the BC Assessment Act, i.e., land that has "farm status".

All other uses of slaughterhouse liquid waste for irrigation must meet the following requirements:

- A nutrient management plan must be prepared by a Qualified Professional. This plan must include an analysis of the possible effect on the ground caused by the application of the liquid waste, a description of what the land is used for and how the public might have access to it.
- Before the liquid waste is applied to the land for the first time, a sample of the wastewater must be analyzed by a

laboratory registered with the Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories and in accordance with the requirements of the latest version of the Field Sampling Manual issued by the MOE.

- The analysis must show the following results:

Fats, oil and grease (FOG) below 10 mg/L of liquid waste
Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD) below 45 mg/L of liquid waste
Total Suspended Solids (TSS) below 45 mg/L of liquid waste
Total Coliform Organisms below 1,000 organisms per 100 ml of liquid waste
Total Fecal Organisms below 200 organisms per 100 ml of liquid waste

- This sampling and analysis must be repeated every 2 weeks during the period when liquid waste is being used for irrigation.
- Records of results of the sampling and analysis must be kept for 10 years by the person who discharges the liquid waste to the land

You are required to comply with all plans that are required to be completed under the Code, retain them and make them available to an officer within two days of a request.

For more information, consult our website at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/codes/slaughter/index.htm>

or email the Environmental Management Branch at [envprotdiv@victoria1.gov.bc.ca](mailto:envprotdiv@victoria1.gov.bc.ca).

*Note: This summary is solely for the convenience of the reader. The current legislation and regulations should be consulted for complete information.*