

# WELFARE OF ANIMALS DURING TRANSPORT – EU REGULATION 1/2005

## Fitness for Transport: Guidance Notes

### Introduction

***This guidance on fitness for transport is essential reading for all involved in the transport of animals.***

Like humans, animals can find journeys stressful and tiring; muscular fatigue, temperature variations, unfamiliar surroundings and noises, changes in diet, movement to new premises and mixing with unfamiliar animals can all present challenges. The Regulation requires that an animal must be fit for the intended journey before the journey starts *and must remain sufficiently fit throughout the journey*. This means the animal should be healthy enough to tolerate the entire journey it is about to make (including loading, unloading and any journey breaks) with no or very little adverse effect on it; the journey should not cause the animal any suffering or injury. Where the journey is expected to be more challenging – for example long journeys involving multiple legs, where more extreme temperatures are expected or where driving conditions are poor – the animals to be transported will need to be fitter than if they were to be making a less difficult journey.

On later pages of this section of guidance the wording of the legislation relating to fitness is reproduced. The rest of this guidance aims to help those transporting animals to understand these legal requirements.

Animals must be assessed for fitness *before* the journey commences. There is no requirement for any particular person to make this assessment. However, the person who assesses fitness should be knowledgeable, familiar with the animals in question and able to understand, interpret and use the available guidance. This could be the farmer, the owner of the animal, a stockman, a veterinarian, a transporter or a local authority enforcement officer. It is essential that signs of good health, poor health and of pain can be recognised. The person assessing fitness should check the condition of every animal to be transported by thorough observation and, where necessary, closer examination, immediately before each animal is loaded onto a vehicle. *In all cases however, the final decision and responsibility on whether to transport an animal rests with the driver of the vehicle or the keeper of the animal who will accompany the animal during the journey.* Whenever the fitness of an animal is in doubt, obtain an informed opinion from a veterinary surgeon prior to commencing transport. For unusual or exotic species, a recognised expert in that species (for example, from a breed society, aquaria or zoological gardens) may provide advice. Where doubt on an animal's fitness exists and expert advice is not available, it is recommended that you do not transport the animal.

The assessment of the fitness of poultry must be undertaken prior to packing them into transport crates. Where this assessment is not undertaken by the transporter, there should be clear and documented procedures as to who undertakes and has responsibility for this task, and what action is to be taken on birds that are judged unfit for transport. Once loading of birds commences however, the transporter is wholly responsible for the welfare of the birds until they are unloaded at the end of the journey.

The definition of fitness is now slightly different in the markets and the transport legislation. The Welfare of Animals at Markets Order prohibits the presentation at market of any animal that is infirm, diseased, ill, injured or fatigued. For practical purposes, any animal that is unfit for transport will also be unfit for presentation or sale at a market.

**TECHNICAL RULES**  
(as referred to in Article 6(3), Article 8(1), Article 9(1) and (2)(a))  
**CHAPTER I**  
**FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT**

1. No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the intended journey, and all animals shall be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them injury or unnecessary suffering.

2. Animals that are injured or that present physiological weaknesses or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport and in particular if:

- (a) they are unable to move independently without pain or to walk unassisted;
- (b) they present a severe open wound, or prolapse;
- (c) they are pregnant females for whom 90 % or more of the expected gestation period has already passed, or females who have given birth in the previous week;
- (d) they are new-born mammals in which the navel has not completely healed;
- (e) they are pigs of less than three weeks, lambs of less than one week and calves of less than ten days of age, unless they are transported less than 100 km;
- (f) they are dogs and cats of less than eight weeks of age, unless they are accompanied by their mother;
- (g) they are cervine animals in velvet.

3. However, sick or injured animals may be considered fit for transport if they are:

- (a) slightly injured or ill and transport would not cause additional suffering; in cases of doubt, veterinary advice shall be sought;
- (b) transported for the purposes of Council Directive 86/609/EEC (1) if the illness or injury is part of a research programme;
- (c) transported under veterinary supervision for or following veterinary treatment or diagnosis. However, such transport shall be permitted only where no unnecessary suffering or ill treatment is caused to the animals concerned;
- (d) animals that have been submitted to veterinary procedures in relation to farming practices such as dehorning or castration, provided that wounds have completely healed.

4. When animals fall ill or are injured during transport, they shall be separated from the others and receive first-aid treatment as soon as possible. They shall be given appropriate veterinary treatment and if necessary undergo emergency slaughter or killing in a way which does not cause them any unnecessary suffering.

5. Sedatives shall not be used on animals to be transported unless strictly necessary to ensure the welfare of the animals and shall only be used under veterinary supervision.

6. Lactating females of bovine, ovine and caprine species not accompanied by their offspring shall be milked at intervals of not more than 12 hours.

7. Requirements of paragraphs 2(c) and 2(d) do not apply for registered Equidae if the purpose of the journeys is to improve the health and welfare conditions of birth, or for newly born foals with their registered mares, provided that in both cases the animals are permanently accompanied by an attendant, dedicated to them during the journey.

(1) OJ L 358, 18.12.1986 p. 1. Directive as last amended by Directive 2003/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 230, 16.9.2003, p. 32).

## Explaining 'Fitness for Transport'

The Regulation sets out some specific circumstances when animals are not fit for transport and provides guidance for other circumstances. The text in bold italics below is the original legal text and guidance follows.

### ***1. No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the intended journey; and all animals shall be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them unnecessary suffering***

Every animal should be fit for the journey that is planned. Animals should be in good health, free of illness, free of any significant wounds and able to walk without pain on all legs. Animals that are in sufficiently good health, should be able to withstand the stress of a journey without experiencing any unnecessary pain or distress, and should arrive at their destination in good health. **Animals that are not fit for the intended journey must not be transported.**

### **Animals that are Unfit for Transport**

Although it is not possible to provide a complete list of all conditions that will make an animal unfit for transport, any animal suffering from one or more of the following conditions is very unlikely to be fit for any journey.

- Any condition causing weight loss (particularly chronic weight loss)
- Any condition of the digestive system causing repeated vomiting or diarrhoea
- Any condition causing breathing difficulties
- Any condition obviously affecting the normal walking of the animal
- Any condition that prevents an animal from eating or drinking
- Any condition making the animal depressed, nervous or aggressive
- Any condition causing wasting (emaciation) or a temperature (fever)
- Animals suffering from any infectious disease should not be transported

Additionally, recently shorn sheep are unfit for transport from November to March every year (unless in temperature controlled vehicles).

### ***2. Animals that are injured or present physiological weaknesses or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport***

Any animal that shows signs of or suffering from any generalised weakness or disease state will not be fit for transport. Examples of this could be wasting, scour, uncoordinated movement, or obvious breathing difficulties, but there are many other conditions that will make an animal unfit.

The legislation describes specific conditions where animals are unfit for transport:

***(a) they are unable to move independently without pain or to walk unassisted***

The animal must be able to walk freely and unassisted on all limbs without any need for more than usual encouragement. An animal showing signs of lameness is likely to be in pain and must not be transported, unless for reasons of veterinary diagnosis or treatment. Animals generally should not be pushed or dragged, and nor should any mechanical apparatus be used to load them onto vehicles (except pneumatic tailgates, but the animal must walk onto these freely) unless there are clear benefits to the welfare of the animal. Lameness can usually be detected by good observation of the affected animal, or by comparing that animal with other animals in the group.

Lameness is a common condition in livestock. There are **very few circumstances where lameness is not a painful condition**. As a general rule therefore, any animal that is suffering lameness in one or more legs must not be transported.

Horses with painful lameness must not be transported, unless they are being moved to a veterinary surgery for treatment or diagnosis. Some lameness can however be functional or mechanical and may not be painful. Before considering transporting horses with functional lameness, seek the advice of an experienced veterinary surgeon. Any horse being transported should be sufficiently stable on all four legs to be able maintain stance and balance adequately throughout the journey; transport must not cause the animal any pain or distress.

Laminitis, or inflammation of the soft tissue lining the horn of the hoof, is a condition common in ponies. It can be mild to severe, when the condition can be extremely painful. Ponies suffering from painful laminitis must not be transported. Mildly affected laminitic ponies are only fit for short journeys, should only be transported under veterinary guidance, and must not be transported regularly.

Whenever a lame animal is transported, the journey conditions will need to be improved. It will usually be necessary to pen the animal singly, ensure the floor provides good footing, provide sufficient space for the animal to lie down, provide deep litter bedding for comfort, and the driver should take special care to avoid any sudden changes in speed or direction that might throw the animal off balance.

Broilers can suffer lesions on the feet which can be mild to advanced and which may be painful. An assessment of foot and leg health should be undertaken before transporting poultry. Birds with severe and painful conditions like advanced plantar necrosis are unfit for transport.

***(b) they present a severe open wound, or prolapse***

Animals with *any* wounds entering a body cavity, such as the chest or abdomen, or the groin are not fit for transport. If a wound is bleeding freely, or has become infected, the animal will be unfit. Any other sizable skin wound that is actively bleeding (other than ear tags damaged during loading in the case of livestock) makes an animal unfit. For animals with wounds that are healing or under active veterinary treatment, where the wound is small, almost healed, non-infected and not causing the animal any pain, then the animal may be fit for transport. Animals with larger wounds that are supported and dressed adequately to prevent them from worsening during transport, may be fit if careful attention is given to the conditions of transport.

Birds with skin wounds, or any wound penetrating deeper into the tissues or body cavities, should not be transported. Any bird suffering a prolapse (abnormal displacement) of tissues around the vent (cloaca) is unfit for transport.

Prolapses occur where body organs and tissues move from their normal position within a body cavity. The prolapse may be 'internal', e.g. inguinal or umbilical prolapses, where the prolapsed tissue is covered by an intact layer of skin and might only be seen as an abnormal swelling beneath the skin. Rectal or vaginal prolapses are 'external'; here the displaced tissue is exposed to the environment. Animals with external prolapses, are not fit for transport, unless the prolapse is small, as it could easily be damaged during transport. Animals with internal prolapses may be fit for transport if the prolapse is not causing pain and is unlikely to worsen or become damaged during the journey. Animals with ruptured prolapses must not be transported. For livestock, attempts should be made to correct any external prolapse well before moving the animal. An animal suffering from a prolapse can only be transported in limited circumstances – usually for treatment or slaughter. The prolapse must be small, non-painful, not bleeding, and must be protected during transport, for example by single penning and deep bedding the animal.

***(c) they are pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed, or females who have given birth in the previous week***

Females in the last 10% of pregnancy, or that have given birth in last week are not fit for transport and also unfit for presentation at market. So, if the expected gestation period is 150 days, the animal must not be transported in the last 15 days of pregnancy. Examples of average gestation periods are cattle – 270 days, sheep – 150 days, pigs – 116 days; mares between 305 and 360 days; dogs and cats – 60-65 days.

It may be difficult to assess when 90% of the expected gestation period has passed. This date should be available from the keeper, or from available records of conception dates, which a transporter should check if concerned. If in doubt, caution should prevail. Alternatively, females show obvious changes when they

are about to give birth. These include 'bagging up' or increase in size of the mammary glands; seepage of milk from the teats; relaxation of ligaments around the pelvis; nest building and other behavioural changes; and discharges from the birth canal. Animals showing any of these signs are not fit for transport.

It is possible for a mare to give birth before having reached 90% of the expected gestation period. In these situations, good judgement will need to be applied, such as considering whether the animal has a history of short gestation periods. If mares show signs that they are about to give birth they are not fit for transport.

Any female animal that has just given birth must not be transported until 7 days after the birth.

This provision does not apply to pregnant bovines that have reacted positively to a bovine tuberculosis test or to any other animals that need to be compulsorily slaughtered by the State Veterinary Service (SVS) for animal health reasons. The movement of such animals is permissible under the supervision of the SVS. Due regard should be paid to the welfare of pregnant animals during transport and any improved journey conditions that might be required. However, the movement of animals that are likely to give birth imminently must be avoided until after the birth is completed and they are sufficiently fit for the intended journey.

***(d) they are new-born animals in which the navel has not completely healed;***

***(e) they are pigs of less than three weeks, lambs of less than one week, calves of less than ten days of age, unless they are transported less than 100km***

Both the internal and external navel of young animals must have healed completely before they can be transported. The time for this varies between species. The external navel is healed when the umbilicus is dry and shrivelled and the external skin beneath it is completely healed over, leaving no holes. Certain types of young livestock, as mentioned above, can only undergo short journeys of less than 100km until they reach specific ages, although there are special conditions for farmers transporting their own stock on short journeys.

Whenever cows, ewes or goats in milk are transported without their young, they must be milked at intervals of no longer than 12 hours.

There is a specific exemption for **registered equidae** from the above requirements "if the purpose of the journeys is to improve the health and welfare conditions of birth". This applies only to "newly born foals with their registered mares, provided that in both cases the animals are permanently accompanied by an attendant, dedicated to them during the journey." The movement of late pregnant mares, or newly birthed mares and foals is therefore permitted when there are clear benefits for the animals' welfare in moving them. Improved

birthing conditions could be: superior stabling and facilities compared to the home accommodation; being closer to an experienced veterinary surgeon to call in case of emergencies; or having available more experienced staff to assist during foaling.

The rules on fitness for transport in Annex I of EC Regulation 1/2005 do not apply to transport carried out by farmers of their own animals, in their own vehicles, for a distance of less than 50 km from their holding (it should be noted, however, that general conditions for transport set out in Article 3 still apply). This means that a farmer may transport his own late pregnant stock, and newly born stock, short distances between or within nearby farm premises, or make use of a haulier to undertake such movements, where the purpose is to improve the conditions of birth. Pregnant animals must not be moved when birth is imminent, however. Such transport must not cause unnecessary pain or suffering and should be undertaken only for reasons of improving the welfare of the animals around the time of birth.

***(f) they are dogs and cats of less than eight weeks of age, unless they are accompanied by their mother;***

Puppies and kittens less than 8 weeks must not be transported unless accompanied by *and have constant access to* their mother. This requirement does not apply to abandoned or orphaned puppies and kittens where the transport is to protect their welfare. Additionally, the navels of puppies and kittens must be healed, such that the cord is dry and shrivelled, and the skin has fully grown over, before transport can be considered.

***(g) they are cervine animals in velvet***

Deer in velvet are not fit for transport. This relates to a brief period early in the breeding season when the antlers of male deer become covered in highly vascular skin, known as velvet. The velvet is shed approximately one month later, when the animals are once again fit.

***3. However, sick or injured animals may be considered fit for transport if they are:***

***(a) slightly injured or ill and transport would not cause additional suffering; in cases of doubt veterinary advice should be sought***

In certain circumstances the transport of slightly ill or injured animals is permissible. The judgement of what is 'slightly ill or injured' will be difficult in many cases. Four considerations should be taken into account:

- The condition should only be minor and have little impact on the animal's ability to withstand transport.
- Transport must not cause the animal to suffer unnecessarily or more so than if it had not been transported; the condition must not worsen during transport.

- It is advisable to have any slightly ill or injured animal assessed by a veterinary surgeon before considering transport. A veterinarian can provide an informed opinion and advise on whether and how an animal might be moved.
- Where there is any doubt or disagreement, it is better not to transport it.

Each case must be judged individually, and the welfare of the animal must be the first consideration. Where there is any doubt, a veterinary surgeon should be consulted. After examination of the animal, the vet may offer advice on whether transport would be acceptable, or indicate that the animal is only fit for a short journey where the transport conditions are improved to benefit the animal's welfare. Animals that are slightly ill or injured will usually benefit from, and in many cases *require* improved transport conditions.

Animals that are slightly ill or injured may be transported under very limited circumstances. They may be transported to a veterinary surgery for purposes of diagnosis or treatment, and in some cases, it may be acceptable to transport the animals direct from a farm to the nearest available slaughterhouse for immediate slaughter. This provision would allow farmers to transport small numbers of livestock with *mild to moderate* lameness direct from the farm of origin to a slaughterhouse. In addition to ensuring that the official veterinarian of the abattoir will accept the animals in question, the transporter must ensure that additional requirements during transport are met to protect the welfare of lame livestock. Lame animals must be transported in improved conditions: each lame animal should be penned singly, given sufficient space to lie down, and adequately deep bedded for comfort; the transporter must move the animals directly from the farm to the slaughterhouse and careful driving should be practised throughout the journey. In all circumstances, the transport of slightly ill or injured animals must not cause any unnecessary suffering or necessitate any ill treatment of the animals concerned. Slightly ill or injured animals, including lame animals, should not be transported to or presented for sale at markets.

***(b) transported for the purposes of Council Directive 86/609/EEC if the illness is part of a research programme***

This refers only to the transport of animals used in medical research programmes. The conditions outlined in this generic guidance apply to the transport of all laboratory animals including those undergoing regulated procedures under the authority of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (A(SP)A). Exceptions may be authorised under A(SP)A where there is a compelling scientific need to move animals which are ill or injured. No additional suffering or injury should be imposed by the transport of such animals, and particular attention should be paid to the additional care which may be required to protect their welfare. A competent person should confirm that such animals are fit for the intended journey.

Separate recommendations applicable to the transport of all laboratory species intended for use in research have been published by the Laboratory Animal Science Association (Laboratory Animals (2005)39).

***(c) transported under veterinary supervision for or following veterinary treatment or diagnosis. However such transport shall only be permitted where no unnecessary suffering or ill treatment is caused to the animals concerned***

An animal may be transported to a veterinary surgery when it is sick or injured for diagnosis and / or treatment of the condition, or for euthanasia, although it may be preferable or necessary to humanely destroy a sick animal without moving it. The veterinarian should first be informed that the animal is being moved, and he or she should provide advice on how best to transport the animal, if appropriate. A vet may advise on how to improve transport conditions or may suggest the use of painkillers or other medicines to make the animal more comfortable during the journey. Where an animal is unable to walk freely onto a vehicle and cannot be carefully lifted on board, it will often be preferable to call the vet out to examine the animal in its home surroundings.

Horses are not uncommonly transported to a veterinary surgery for routine surgical day procedures such as castration. The animal often receives heavy sedation or general anaesthesia for such procedures. In some cases, the drugs used can remain active for hours after the procedure, and affect the balance, gait and co-ordination of the animal. If the transporter intends to return the animal to its place of origin on the same day of the surgery, he must be satisfied that the animal has sufficiently recovered from the effects of any anaesthetics. The veterinarian will be best placed to advise on whether the animal is fit to be transported. Transport conditions should be improved to ensure the health of the animal is not jeopardised during the return journey. If there is any doubt over the fitness of the animal, it will often be preferable to stable it at the veterinary surgery until it is considered fit to be moved.

***(d) animals that have been submitted to veterinary procedures in relation to farming practices such as dehorning or castration, provided that wounds have healed completely***

Any wounds from dehorning, castration, surgical tail-docking or other farm practice veterinary procedure must have healed completely before such animals can be considered fit for transport.

***4. When animals fall ill or are injured during transport, they shall be separated from others and receive first-aid treatment as soon as possible. They shall be given appropriate veterinary treatment and if necessary undergo emergency slaughter or killing in a way that does not cause them any unnecessary suffering***

Transporters need to make regular checks of their animals at regular and appropriate intervals throughout a journey. If sick or injured animals are identified, action needs to be taken to prevent them from experiencing further suffering. Sick animals should, where possible, be provided with a separate pen or transport container where they have adequate space and sufficient bedding to lie down, and where they are not disturbed by other animals.

If veterinary treatment is appropriate or necessary, then the animal should be moved to and unloaded at the nearest suitable site where veterinary treatment can be given. If treatment is inappropriate, then euthanasia or emergency slaughter at the nearest slaughterhouse may be the only remaining option. This action needs to be taken as soon as is practically possible after the problem is discovered.

In some circumstances for livestock, it may only be possible and realistic to take action at the end of the intended journey. However, in justifying any course of action, a transporter must consider all available options; for example, what is the location of the nearest slaughterhouse or veterinary surgery; can the animal receive emergency treatment there; what is the best way of preventing further suffering? The health and welfare of the animal in question should always be the most important consideration.

***5. Sedatives shall not be used on animals unless strictly necessary to ensure the welfare of the animals and shall only be used under veterinary supervision***

Sedatives should not be given to animals undergoing transport without good reason. They can reduce the ability of an animal to cope with the stresses of transport: Animals are less able to control body temperature and the unsteadiness caused by many sedatives may increase the chances of the animal falling and sustaining injuries.

Sedatives are veterinary medicines, carry mandatory withdrawal periods, and are usually inappropriate for use in food-producing animals. If an animal can only be transported sedated, consider whether it should be moved at all. Sedative use may occasionally be justified where there are clear benefits to the animal's welfare that outweigh any risks associated with use. Clear guidance should be provided by the prescribing vet, explaining the risks and side effects of sedative drugs.

Equids should generally not be given sedatives for transportation. There are two exceptions to this general rule. Firstly, grooms accompanying horses on board ships or aeroplanes will usually carry a small quantity of sedative. This should only be used in emergencies when the behaviour of any horse deteriorates such that the health and safety of other animals or people are put at risk. Horses

known to be uncomfortable with transport and that regularly display unpredictable behaviour should not be considered fit for transport. Secondly, wild ponies are sometimes moved from remote areas of hill or moorland to places where they can be better taken care of. The transport of such animals is a highly specialised task and expert advice should be obtained. Occasionally, sedatives will be useful to calm a fractious pony that has become a danger to itself or other animals or humans. In all cases, sedatives should be obtained from a veterinary surgeon, and used under his or her direction. The animals being dosed should be under the care of the veterinarian.

Sedatives generally should not be used to enable dogs and cats to be transported, unless they will specifically benefit the animal's welfare, the risks have been considered, and the sedative drugs have been prescribed by the animal's veterinary surgeon

## **Improving Transport Conditions and Contingency Planning**

It is important to know how to improve transport conditions. Animals that experience a better quality of journey will often tolerate the stresses of the journey better and arrive at their destination in better condition. Where an animal is not fully fit, perhaps because of a minor illness or injury, it will be beneficial and in some cases necessary to provide improved transport conditions.

The following groups of animals will benefit particularly from improved transport conditions:

- animals that are slightly ill or injured;
- animals undergoing long journeys;
- animals that become ill or sustain injuries during a journey;
- animals being transported to a veterinary surgery for treatment or diagnosis;
- young or old animals;
- pregnant animals;
- animals on any other journeys where transport conditions become challenging.

Transport conditions can be improved in several ways. The law does not describe specific measures that must be implemented. The actions detailed below are suggestions, and do not describe all useful measures that might be adopted. Depending on the circumstances, transporters should decide what measures are achievable and realistic, and what measures will actively benefit the animal.

- adjust the ventilation appropriately with adjustable ventilation slots;
- avoid leaving the vehicle stationary on hot or humid days: keep the vehicle moving to assist air movement over the animals;
- always park the vehicle in shade at right angles to the prevailing wind;
- reduce the stocking density / increase the space allowance;
- provide comfortable bedding or extra bedding;
- isolate the animal from others in a single pen;
- horses or ponies that are not fully fit will often require a single stall;
- pen the animals away from the hottest or coolest parts of the vehicle: upper decks at the front generally experience hotter temperatures; lower decks at the rear generally experience cooler temperatures;
- undertake the journey during the cooler parts of the day or at night;
- provide appropriate food and water as often as necessary where this will benefit the animal; ideally the animal should be familiar with the food – changes in diet are not recommended;

- young stock, (calves in particular) not on roughage may be offered water, together with electrolyte replacement; if milk replacement is offered, this should be of the same formulation the calf has previously been fed;
- increase frequency of animal inspections;
- adjust group sizes;
- remove fractious, nervous or aggressive animals;
- use appropriate veterinary medicines: painkillers (analgesics); antibiotics; fluid therapy under veterinary guidance;
- use dressings to cover and protect wounds;
- use splints to support injured limbs;
- consider whether the animal's condition warrants euthanasia or emergency slaughter without further transport; if the animal can be moved, what is the location of the nearest slaughterhouse or veterinary surgery?

### Journey Planning and Contingency Planning

There are many circumstances where journey plans are altered for unexpected reasons through no fault of the transporter. Traffic jams can cause severe delays; rough weather can delay ferry crossings; and injuries that animals sustain during a journey can cause delays if the animal requires urgent attention. Temperature changes can mean that it is either unwise or illegal to transport animals. Delays can frequently occur at border inspection posts whilst official checks are undertaken. Journey plans can also be altered where national or local animal movement restrictions are in place, perhaps because of disease outbreaks. If it is known before a journey starts that problems are likely to arise – for example, where severe delays on a ferry crossing are expected - the transporter should consider whether the original journey plan is still appropriate. It might be better to delay the start of the journey, or to investigate an alternative route.

Unexpected problems can also occur once a journey has started. Transporters should have contingency plans in place for such events. These plans should be developed before transport commences. Contingency plans are even more appropriate where a long or complex journey is planned as there is greater risk that problems will arise. The contingency plan should be brought into effect whenever a problem is encountered and the transporter requires additional assistance. There is no fixed format that any such plan should follow. At the simplest level, the driver may be equipped with a mobile phone and the number of a key person or organisation that can be contacted at any time in case of emergency for advice. **It is a condition of authorisation that all transporters undertaking long journeys have contingency plans.** Some suggestions as to what information and actions could be incorporated into a contingency plan are given below. These details should be kept together and marked appropriately so that they can be accessed easily by the driver, or e.g. the emergency services.

- Keep contact details for: state veterinary service; private veterinarian; local authority; animal keeper/owner; local slaughterhouses and knackermen; RSPCA; Humane Slaughter Association.
- Contact details for and addresses of points of departure and destination and the transporter's business address.
- Keep contact details of staging points where animals may be unloaded, rested, fed and watered if necessary.
- Keep contact details for ferry companies if the journey involves sea crossings.
- Carry maps or satellite navigation systems that allow alternative routes to be planned.
- Carry on board sufficient food and water appropriate for the animals.
- Reserve space and pens on board a vehicle to separate animals that becomes sick or injured during journeys.
- A basic first aid kit may be useful in some circumstances.

## **Essential Points to Remember**

1. **If you transport animals it is your responsibility to ensure that they are fit for transport**, even though other competent and responsible people (e.g. the animal's owner) may be involved in assessing the fitness of an animal for transport.

2. **Assessment of fitness is an ongoing procedure that should be repeated throughout a journey**, and not something that should only be undertaken before the start of it. The condition of an animal can change rapidly during a journey, and an animal that was initially fit at the outset, may – for several reasons – become unfit later in the journey. Drivers should take the opportunities presented by rest, toilet and other breaks in the journey to re-check their animals.

3. Whenever the fitness of an animal or group of animals is in doubt, or disputed, transporters are advised strongly **before undertaking transport to obtain the professional opinion of a veterinary surgeon** and consider and follow any advice given. The transporter may wish to obtain **a written opinion from the veterinarian**.

4. Where animals that are slightly ill or injured are judged to be sufficiently fit for transport, it will often be necessary to **provide better transport conditions during the journey**.

### **5. Fitness Checklist**

- All animals should be fit for the intended journey.
- Animals should not be transported if they are ill or injured.
- Slightly ill or slightly injured animals can be transported, but only if the transport causes them no additional suffering or pain.
- Young stock can only be transported in specific circumstances.
- Transporters should take all reasonable measures to protect the welfare of animals they are transporting.
- The assessment of fitness should be performed by someone competent to assess the health of the animals – if in doubt consult a vet.
- The vehicle and animal compartments should be in a good state of repair and not cause the animals any harm.
- Animals that fall sick or injured during a journey should receive appropriate first aid or other veterinary treatment, or undergo emergency slaughter.
- Drivers should have contingency plans in place to deal with unexpected problems encountered during journeys.