

WAC 16-24-040 Mechanical—Gunshot. The slaughtering of cattle, calves, sheep, swine, goats, horses and mules by shooting with firearms and the handling in connection therewith, in compliance with the provisions contained in this section, are hereby designated and approved as humane methods of slaughtering and handling of such animals under the law.

(1) Utilization of firearms, required effect; handling.

(a) The firearms shall be employed in the delivery of a bullet or projectile into the animal in accordance with this section so as to produce immediate unconsciousness in the animal by a single shot before it is shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast, or cut. The animals shall be shot in such a manner that they will be rendered unconscious with a minimum of excitement and discomfort.

(b) The driving of the animals to the shooting areas shall be done with a minimum of excitement and discomfort to the animals. Delivery of calm animals to the shooting area is essential since accurate placement of the bullet is difficult in case of nervous or injured animals. Among other things, this requires that, in driving animals to the shooting areas, electrical equipment be used as little as possible and with the lowest effective voltage.

(c) Immediately after the firearm is discharged and the projectile is delivered, the animal shall be in a state of complete unconsciousness and remain in this condition throughout shackling, sticking and bleeding.

(2) Facilities and procedure.

(a) General requirements for shooting facilities; operator.

(i) On discharge, acceptable firearms dispatch free projectiles or bullets of varying sizes and diameters through the skull and into the brain. Unconsciousness is produced immediately by a combination of physical brain destruction and changes in intracranial pressure. Caliber of firearms shall be such that when properly aimed and discharged, the projectile produces immediate unconsciousness.

(ii) To assure uniform unconsciousness with every discharge when small-bore firearms are used, it is necessary to use one of the following type projectiles: Hollow pointed bullets, frangible iron plastic composition bullets, or powdered iron missiles. When powdered iron missiles are used, the firearms shall be in close proximity with the skull of the animal when fired. Firearms must be maintained in good repair. For purposes of protecting employees, inspectors, and others, it is desirable that all firearms be equipped with safety devices to prevent injuries from accidental discharge. Aiming and discharging of firearms should be directed away from operating areas.

(iii) The provisions contained in WAC 16-24-030 (2)(a)(iii) with respect to the stunning area also apply to the shooting area.

(iv) The shooting operation is an exacting procedure and requires a well-trained and experienced operator. They must be able to accurately direct the projectile to produce immediate unconsciousness. They must use the correct caliber firearm, powder charge and type of ammunition to produce the desired results.

(b) Special requirements: Choice of firearms and ammunition with respect to caliber and choice of powder charge required to produce immediate unconsciousness varies, depending on age and sex of the animal. In the case of bulls, rams, and boars, small-bore firearms may be used provided they are able to produce immediate unconsciousness of the animals. Small-bore firearms are usually effective for stunning other cattle, sheep, swine, goats, calves, horses and mules.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 16.50.130 and 43.01.160. WSR 24-22-024, s 16-24-040, filed 10/28/24, effective 11/28/24; Order 1067, Regulation 8, filed 9/19/67, effective 10/20/67; Order 804, Regulation 1.04, effective 3/18/60.]