

The *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines - Land Transport of Livestock* (Edition One), commonly referred to as the Land Transport Standards (LTS) are being adopted under State and Territory legislation across Australia from 1 July 2012. In the Northern Territory, LTS will be adopted under the *Livestock Regulations* with compliance and enforcement activity undertaken by Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries commencing 1 January 2013. Future nationally approved editions of the LTS will be adopted as changes are required.

The nationally agreed animal welfare standards and guidelines were developed cooperatively by the livestock industries and government, under the *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy* (AAWS) with extensive consultation with all stakeholders involved in the transport of livestock. The standards and guidelines are based on the revision of the Model Codes of Practice for Welfare for the transport of various livestock species.

**Yard managers** play an important role in the livestock supply chain and have an integral role in ensuring the welfare of livestock at the yards during the journey between the origin and destination. Yard managers need to have a good understanding of the Standards in order to conduct their business in a responsible and professional way and ensure their staff are also aware of their responsibilities.

## What animal species are covered by the Land Transport Standards?

The Land Transport Standards apply to the major commercial livestock species; cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, alpaca, deer and poultry. They also apply to horses, camels, emus and ostriches (ratites).

The LTS cover the transport of livestock by road and rail, and by livestock transport vehicles aboard a ship. A separate set of Standards, the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock* (ASEL), cover the requirements for export of livestock by ship.

## Who do the Land Transport Standards apply to?

The Standards apply to all people responsible for the care and management of livestock at all stages in the livestock transport process; including the consignor, transporter and receiver of livestock.

The chain of responsibility for livestock welfare in the transport process is:

- The **consignor** for the assembling and preparation of livestock, including the assessment and selection as 'fit for the intended journey', feed and water provisions, and holding periods before loading.
- The **transporter** for the journey, which involves the loading, including final inspection as 'fit for the intended journey', the loading density, inspections and spelling periods during the journey, and unloading.
- The **receiver** after unloading.

**Truck drivers** are involved in the following activities:

- Loading, including final inspection as 'fit for the intended journey' and
- Loading density
- Inspections of livestock during transport
- Unloading livestock at the destination, either at a property, export yard, transit yard, saleyard, abattoir or during a spelling period, and
- Spelling periods during the journey.

## What is the difference between welfare 'Standards' and 'Guidelines'?

Standards are the "must do" requirements for livestock welfare. The standards detail the minimum standards of livestock management practices.

Guidelines are recommended practices to achieve desirable welfare outcomes. Guidelines are the "should do" and complement the standards.

## Land Transport Standards and Guidelines

The *Land Transport Standards* has two sections;

Part A - General standards and guidelines that apply to all livestock species

Part B - Specific standards and guidelines for each livestock species.

### **Part A: General standards and guidelines for the transport of livestock**

There are six sections of 'general' standards in Part A of the LTS document which apply to all livestock species, each of which contains one or more standards and a number of guidelines.

1. **Responsibilities and planning** - These standards identify the people responsible for the care and management of the livestock at all stages of the transport process. They identify certain journey planning requirements which must be carried out and require that contingency measures are in place to minimise the risks to livestock welfare. The guidelines list the recommended practices for consignors, drivers and transport companies, receivers and those responsible for trip planning. If the journey period will exceed a 24 hour period, there are additional responsibilities.
2. **Stock-handling competency** - The objective of this standard is to ensure persons responsible for handling, managing or transporting livestock are competent, and that all those involved are either competent or supervised by a competent person. The guidelines outline the elements of competency for each phase of the transport process.
3. **Transport vehicles and facilities for livestock** - This standard requires livestock transport vehicles and facilities for holding, loading and unloading livestock to be constructed, maintained and operated to minimise the risks to livestock welfare.
4. **Pre-transport selection of livestock** - The objectives of these standards are to ensure all livestock prepared and selected for transport, are 'fit for the intended journey' (refer to the MLA published booklet 'Is it fit to load?'). The standards detail certain criteria for which an animal is deemed 'not fit for a journey', and what must be done with animals assessed as not fit. **It is the responsibility of the consignor to ensure they only supply livestock that are assessed as 'fit for the intended journey'**. The transport driver has a joint responsibility in ensuring only animals assessed as 'fit for the intended journey' are loaded. The guidelines give recommendations on selection of livestock, and feed, water and rest considerations.
  - Livestock must be provided with water, food and rest (a spell) once the maximum permitted time off water is reached, before continuing the current journey, or before starting another journey;
  - the timeframe in which stock must be provided with water at a saleyard or spelling facility when no documentation is available indicating when stock last had access to water;
  - Loading density and segregation of animals;
  - Livestock handling that is appropriate to the animal species and class;
  - Limitations on the use of electric prodders and dogs;
  - Action required when distressed or injured stock are identified; and
  - The guidelines cover recommendations on loading; loading density, livestock handling, weak, ill or injured livestock, segregation during transport, driving management, weather conditions, in-transit inspection, feed, water, rest, stops and spells during and after the journey, and unloading and identifying ill or injured stock on arrival.
5. **Loading, transporting and unloading livestock** - These standards are to ensure livestock are handled, loaded, transported and unloaded in a manner that minimises risks to livestock welfare.
6. **Humane destruction** - These standards provide for where it is necessary to destroy livestock, it is done promptly, safely and humanely. The guidelines detail humane destruction methods and procedures.

## Part B: Species specific requirements

This section of the LTS document specifies the specific requirements for the transport of the various livestock species.

Each species section details standards and guidelines for:

- The **maximum permitted time off water** period for the particular classes of stock (adults, young, pregnant or lactating females etc). Refer to Table 1 for maximum time periods for the major commercial livestock species;
- The required **minimum spell period** (water, food and rest) once livestock reach the maximum permitted time off water period. Refer to Table 1 for minimum spelling periods for the major commercial livestock species;
- Any permitted extension of journey time where feed and water is provided in-transit;
- Restrictions on the use of **electric prodders** in certain species / class of animals;
- Restrictions on the use of **dogs** in certain species / class of animals; and
- Segregation of certain classes of stock.

The species specific guidelines give recommendations on such details as:

- considerations for long distance travel and fitness;
- food and water;
- loading density;
- vehicles and facilities;
- handling; and
- humane destruction methods.

**Table 1. Maximum Time off Water and Minimum Spelling periods for Cattle, Buffalo, Camels, Horses, Goats, Sheep and Pigs**

Species	Class	Maximum time off water (hours)	Mandatory spell period (hours)
<b>Cattle</b>	Cattle over 6 months old	48	36
	Calves 1-6 months old	24	12
	Lactating cows with calves at foot	24	12
	Cows known to more than 6 months pregnant, excluding the last 4 weeks	24	12
<b>Buffalo</b>	Adult buffalo over 6 months old	36	24
	Buffalo 1-6 months old	24	12
	Lactating buffalo with calves at foot and buffalo known to more than 7 months pregnant, excluding the last 4 weeks	24	12
<b>Camels</b>	Camels over 6 months old	48	36
	Camels 1-6 months old	24	12
	Lactating camels with calves at foot	24	12
	Camels known to more than 9 months pregnant, excluding the last 4 weeks	24	12
<b>Horses</b>	Horses over 6 months old	24	12
	Lactating mares	12	12
	Foals less than 6 months old	12	12
	Mares known to be more than 7.5 months pregnant, excluding the last 4 wks	12	12
<b>Goats</b>	Goats over 6 months old	48	36
	Kids under 6 months	28	12
	Goats known to be more than 14 wks pregnant, excluding the last 2 weeks	24	12
<b>Sheep</b>	Sheep over 4 months old	48	36
	Lambs under 4 months old	28	12
	Ewes known to be more than 14 wks pregnant, excluding the last 2 weeks	24	12
<b>Pigs</b>	Pigs	24	12
	Lactating Sows and Piglets	12	12
	Weaners	12	12

## What are my obligations during livestock transport?

The Northern Territory *Livestock Regulations* requires all people involved in the livestock transport process to comply with the *Land Transport Standards*. There will be penalties including infringement notices or prosecution for those people found to be in breach of the standards.

As the yard manager, you are responsible for the preparation of the consignment for the remaining journey and/or receipt of livestock as part of the transport process. It is important that you understand your responsibilities and how your decisions can impact on the welfare of livestock throughout the transport process. A poor decision during preparation of the consignment can have devastating welfare outcomes during the transport and following receipt at the destination which may also need to be managed by the yard operator for livestock in transit.

The Land Transport Standards for specific livestock species outline the standards relevant to Yard Managers available at [\[link\]](#)

## Livestock Management Standards

The [Land Transport Standards \(Edition One, December 2008\)](#) is the first of a series of national livestock management standards to be introduced across States and Territories. Edition 1.1 of the LTS has been endorsed by the Australian Governments' Standing Council on Primary Industries and has some minor changes to standards. Standards for cattle, sheep and horses are currently being developed.

## Key messages for Yard Managers

The welfare of livestock during the transport process is a whole of supply chain responsibility, with export yard, transit yard and saleyard operators having an important role and responsibility to ensure good animal welfare outcomes.

Yard operators must ensure:

- Yard facilities (loading ramps, holding yards and pens etc) are well constructed and maintained.
- Water is provided to stock as required and feed and rest requirements are met for livestock under their control
- Livestock under their control are handled appropriately
- Weak, sick or injured livestock must be separated at the first reasonable opportunity for rest and recovery and appropriate treatment is arranged or where necessary or humane destruction is performed appropriately.
- Livestock being consigned from the yard are assessed as fit for the intended journey (fit to load).

## Further information

- Land Transport Standards website [www.livestockwelfarestandards.net.au/](http://www.livestockwelfarestandards.net.au/)
- Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries website [www.nt.gov.au/d/livestockwelfare](http://www.nt.gov.au/d/livestockwelfare)
- MLA website – Is it fit to load guide? [www.mla.com.au/Publications-tools-and-events/](http://www.mla.com.au/Publications-tools-and-events/)

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