MEAT PACKING PLANTS

NAICS Code

311611 Animal Slaughtering

(Except Poultry)

Section 9

 SAFETY RULES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

The safety rules contained on these pages have been prepared to protect you in your daily work. Employees are to follow these rules, review them often and use good common sense in carrying out assigned duties.

ALL PERSONNEL

 Lifting Techniques 3

 Step Ladders 3

HOUSEKEEPING PERSONNEL

 General Rules 3

 Steam and High-Pressure Steaming Equipment 4

CATTLE PEN PERSONNEL

 Holding Pens 4

 Stunning Pen 4

KILLING FLOOR PERSONNEL

 General Rules 4

 Knives/Sharp Instruments 4

 Load Area 5

 Blood Pit 5

 Scalding and Dehairing Vats 5

 Elevated Platforms 5

 Hangman 6

 Overhead Rail Trolleys 6

 Hide Pullers and Strippers 6

 Splitter 6

 Viscera Tubs 7

 Auger/Inedible Elevator 7

 Pneumatic Dehorner 7

HIDE HOUSE PERSONNEL

 Hand Trucks 7

 Shovels 7

MEAT PROCESSING PERSONNEL

 General Rules 8

 Overhead Rail Trolleys 8

 Scales 8

 Power Saws 8

 Conveyors 9

 Boning Tables 9

 Sharpening Steels 9

 Meat Tubs 9

 Meat Trees 9

 Vacuum Packing Machines 9

 Racks and Shelves 9

SHIPPING/RECEIVING PERSONNEL

 Refrigerated Warehousing 10

 Hand Trucks 10

 Pallet Jacks 10

 Forklifts 10

 Loading Docks 12

 Truck Drivers 12

MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

 Hand Tools 13

 Electrical Safety 13

 Bench Grinders 13

ALL PERSONNEL

Lifting Techniques

 1. Plan the move before lifting; remove obstructions from your chosen pathway.

 2. Test the weight of the load before lifting by pushing the load along its resting surface.

 3. If the load is too heavy or bulky, use lifting and carrying aids such as hand trucks, pallet jacks, or meat tubs or get assistance from a coworker.

 4. If assistance is required to perform a lift, coordinate, and communicate your movements with those of your coworker.

 5. Position your feet 6 to 12 inches apart with one foot slightly in front of the other.

 6. Face the load.

 7. Bend at the knees, not at the back.

 8. Keep your back straight.

 9. Get a firm grip on the object with your hands and fingers. Use handles when present.

 10. Hold objects as close to your body as possible.

 11. Perform lifting movements smoothly and gradually; do not jerk the load.

 12. If you must change direction while lifting or carrying the load, pivot your feet and turn your entire body. Do not twist at the waist.

 13. Do not lift an object from the floor to a level above your waist in one motion. Set the load down on a table or bench and then adjust your grip before lifting it higher.

Step Ladders

 1. Brush mold, slime and other visible build up from ladder surfaces and wipe the ladder rungs dry before using the ladder.

 2. Do not use a ladder that wobbles or leans.

 3. Do not use a ladder that has loose rungs, cracked or split side rails, missing rubber foot pads or other visible damage.

 4. Allow only one person on the ladder at a time.

 5. Face the ladder when climbing up or down.

 6. Maintain a three-point contact by always keeping both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand on the ladder when climbing up or down.

 7. When performing work from a ladder, face the ladder and do not lean backward or sideways from the ladder.

 8. Do not carry items in your hands while climbing up or down the ladder.

HOUSEKEEPING PERSONNEL - clean-up supervisor, equipment operators

General Rules

 1. Obey all safety rules and danger signs posted in the workplace.

 2. Wear safety glasses and rubber boots that have non-slip soles when performing housekeeping operations.

 3. Remove blood, fat and other meat products from the floors, ladders and other walking and working surfaces every 4-6 hours or more often if the routine cleaning is not sufficient to control build up.

 4. Warn nearby coworkers before dragging a hose across the floor.

 5. Return all hoses to the wall hanger when not in use.

 6. Wear rubber gloves when washing and sanitizing meat hooks, scales, and processing equipment.

Steam and High-Pressure Steaming Equipment

 1. Keep both hands on the spray gun when operating the pressure washer.

 2. Do not allow hoses to loop on the floor when using them.

 3. Do not point the pressure nozzle at anyone or use it to clean yourself.

 4. Remove your rubber boots before washing them with hot water.

CATTLE PEN PERSONNEL - cowboys, veterinarians, knockers

Holding Pens

 1. Stay within arm’s reach of the fence when working in the holding pens.

 2. Close the gate behind you after working an animal from the holding pen.

 3. Never swing the gate towards a hostile animal.

 4. Use the electrical prod to move the cattle into the stunning pen.

Stunning Pens

 1. Do not use the electrolethaler or stunning gun if your hands are wet.

 2. Wear impact resistant safety goggles when using the knocking gun or captive bolt gun.

 3. Do not load the captive bolt gun until you are ready to fire it.

 4. Keep your fingers off the trigger when trying to still the animal.

KILLING FLOOR PERSONNEL - dehorners, hangman, rumpers, sider briskets, hide pullers, viscerators, inspectors, splitters, hi-stand trimmers, and low-stand trimmers

General Rules

 1. Contain your hair under a hat or hair net, regardless of gender.

 2. Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry while working in the killing floor area.

 3. Wear ear plugs and rubber boots that have non-slip soles.

 4. Read and obey safety warnings posted on or near any equipment.

 5. Do not remove safety guards provided on any equipment. When you remove a safety guard for the purpose of making repairs or cleaning, replace the guards before the equipment is put into operation.

 6. Do not approach anyone who is operating any power equipment or handling knives.

Knives/Sharp instruments

 1. When handling knife blades or other cutting tools, direct the sharp points and edges away from you.

 2. Cut in the direction away from your body when using knives.

 3. Do not use knives that have dull blades.

 4. Do not attempt to catch a falling knife.

 5. Do not use knives with broken or loose handles.

 6. Do not pick up knives by their blades.

 7. Do not carry knives or other cutting tools in your pockets or in your apron. Carry them in their sheath or scabbard.

 8. Do not use a scabbard, sheath or holder that does not cover the entire length of the blade.

Load Area

 1. Do not use shackles that are cracked, corroded, bent, or broken.

 2. Do not use chains if the following conditions exist:

 • Bent or stretched links on chains.

 • Cracks in the weld areas, in the shoulders, or other areas of the link.

 • Corrosive pits, scores, or markings in the links.

 3. Do not use a kinked chain. Take up the slack slowly until every link in the chain is unkinked.

 4. Do not attempt to shackle the animal unless it is comatose. Signs of comatose include no pupil response and a blue/gray colored tongue extended from the animal's muzzle or snout.

 5. Place the shackle completely over the animal's hock.

 6. Move your hands away from the shackle and the hock before activating the hoist.

Blood Pit

 1. Do not stand under a hoisted carcass. Stand to the side of the carcass.

 2. Wear knee-high rubber boots when working in the blood pit.

 3. Take short steps when walking in the blood pit.

 4. Use the plunger to stir up the blood so it does not coagulate and clog up the drain.

Scalding and Dehairing vats

 1. Do not fill the vat more than 2/3 full.

 2. Turn off the gas supply and electrical current to the dehairing equipment when it is not in use.

Elevated Platforms (hydraulic, portable)

 1. Do not use any platform tagged "Out of Service".

 2. Do not use the platform unless the guardrails and all flooring are in place.

 3. Do not walk or work beneath an elevated platform.

 4. Use safety belts and lanyards when working on platforms at a height of 10 feet or more above ground level. Attach the lanyard to a secure member of the platform.

 5. Do not jump from, to or between platforms.

 6. Keep both feet on the decking. Do not sit or climb on the guardrails.

 7. Do not lean out from the platform. Do not rock the platform.

 8. Keep the platform free of scraps, meat product, waste product, loose tools, and other obstructions.

 9. Do not throw anything "overboard".

 10. Do not transport a portable platform with anyone on the platform.

 11. Lock and chock wheels on portable platforms before using them.

Hangman

 1. Do not use load hooks that are cracked, corroded, bent, or broken.

 2. Insert the meat hook under the notch of the dewclaw.

 3. Do not place your hands between the hook and the dewclaw when placing the carcass on the meat hook.

 4. Do not load towards the point of the hook. Set the load in the bowel of the hook.

Overhead Rail Trolleys

 1. Wear protective head gear when working under or around overhead conveyors and rails containing trollies.

 2. Move slowly when pushing a carcass on a trolley through the switch area, doorways, passageways, or other blind areas.

 3. Do not swing or ride from the overhead rail trollies.

 4. If the carcass falls off the overhead trolley:

 • Cut the carcass in half between the hind and the front using a hacksaw.

 • Attach a truck hook, an S-hook, and a double hook respectively to the overhead trolley to minimize the height needed to rehang the carcass.

 • Using the assistance of a coworker, hang the hind of the carcass from the dewclaw on one side of the double hook and hang the front of the carcass from the ribs on the remaining side of the double hook.

Hide Pullers and Strippers

 1. Attach the safety chains to each shank of the carcass before activating the hide pulling machine.

 2. Stand clear of the rollers and do not touch any moving parts of the hide pulling machine once it is in operation.

 3. If one of the safety chains comes loose from the shank:

 • Move the rollers downward until the tension is released from the chain.

 • Reattach the chain to the shank.

 4. Use a hand truck to move a drum of hides.

Splitter

 1. Wear safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection, a hard hat and safety shoes while operating a splitter saw.

 2. Do not start the splitter saw until you are ready to begin the cut.

 3. Use both hands to maintain control of the splitter saw.

 4. Keep your body parts and clothing away from the cutting blade.

 5. Do not operate a splitter saw above your shoulder height.

 6. When finished with the cut, remove your finger from the trigger, deactivate the splitter saw and keep the blade away from your body.

 7. Tag damaged splitter saws "Out of Service" to prevent accidental use.

Viscera Tubs

 1. Use viscera tubs for moving inedible products.

 2. Do not stand on a viscera tub or use it as a work platform.

 3. Use the wheel locking lever of the viscera tub to lock the wheels of the tub to prevent movement while placing or removing inedible product or viscera.

Augers/Inedible Elevator

 1. Before starting the auger, visually look along its path. If anyone is working near the auger, do not start it.

 2. Replace all augers covers after adjusting or repairs.

 3. Do not remove the auger cover while the auger is in operation.

 4. Do not poke anything near the rotating auger.

 5. Do not place your hands or arms near the auger for any reason.

 6. Do not allow anyone near the rotating auger while it is in operation.

Pneumatic Dehorner

 1. Disconnect the dehorner machine from the air line before moving, cleaning, or repairing it.

 2. Close the safety hood before activating the dehorner and after using it.

 3. Keep your hands clear of the horn blade.

HIDE HOUSE PERSONNEL

Hand Trucks

 1. Tip the drum slightly forward so that the tongue of the hand truck goes all the way under the drum.

 2. When loading the hand truck, keep your feet clear of the wheels.

 3. Use straps, if provided, to secure the drum.

 4. When going down an incline, keep the hand truck in front of you so that it can be always controlled.

 5. Move the hand truck at a walking pace.

Shovels

 1. Wear leather gloves and steel-toed shoes when using the shovel.

 2. Do not use a shovel that has a loose or broken handle.

 3. When pitching salt, pitch it to your side. Do not pitch it over your head or shoulder.

 4. Place the shovel "spade down" when not in use. Return the shovel to the wall hanger when your work is finished.

MEAT PROCESSING PERSONNEL - power saw operators, de-boners

General Rules

 1. Contain your hair under a hat or hair net, regardless of gender.

 2. Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry while working in the meat processing area. Wear ear plugs and rubber boots that have non-slip soles.

 3. Follow the instructions on the label and in the corresponding Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical product used in the meat processing area.

 4. Read and obey safety warnings posted on or near any equipment.

 5. Do not remove safety guards provided on any equipment. When you remove a safety guard for the purpose of making repairs or cleaning, replace the guards before the equipment is put into operation.

 6. Do not approach anyone who is operating any power equipment.

Overhead Rail Trolleys

 1. Wear your protective head gear when working under or around overhead conveyors and rails containing trollies.

 2. Move slowly when pushing a carcass or meat trees through the switch area, doorways, passageways, or other blind areas.

 3. Do not swing or ride from the overhead rail trollies.

Scales

 1. Move the scale carts by pushing them rather than pulling them.

 2. Use the wheel locking lever of the scale cart to lock the wheels of the scale before using it to weigh meat products.

 3. Store all scale carts in the supply room when not in use.

Power Saws

 1. Do not wear mesh or Kevlar gloves when operating a power saw.

 2. Wear safety glasses, a hard hat, forearm protection and hearing protection when operating a power saw.

 3. Keep your hands away from the exposed blade.

 4. Operate the saw at full cutting speed and with a sharp blade.

 5. Do not reach across the cutting operation.

 6. Do not use your hands to clear scraps around the cutting blade of the band saw; use the pusher stick.

 7. When changing a saw blade or if the saw blade breaks, follow this procedure:

 • Shut off the power.

 • Lock the start switch in the "Off" position.

 • Wear hand protection in the form of mesh or Kevlar gloves on both hands when changing the saw blade.

 • Do not attempt to remove any part of the saw blade until the machine has completely stopped.

 • Replace all guards on the saw when finished replacing the blade.

Conveyors (belt, roller, screw)

 1. Replace the guards before starting the conveyor and after adjusting or repairs.

 2. Do not jump onto, climb over or ride on the conveyor.

Boning Tables

 1. Wear safety glasses, hearing protection, belly guards and arm guards when deboning meat.

 2. Wear a steel glove on the hook hand.

 3. Do not use knives with broken or loose handles.

 4. Do not use knives that have dull blades.

 5. Remove "stiletto" type blades from service.

 6. When using a knife, pull the product with the hook; do not stab the product with the knife.

 7. Do not use a knife to pick up a piece of meat or other product.

 8. Do not attempt to catch a falling knife.

 9. Do not throw meat shavings, fat, or any other product at your coworkers.

 10. Do not carry knives, scissors or other sharp tools in your pockets or apron unless the tools are first placed in their scabbard, sheath, or holder.

 11. Do not use a scabbard, sheath or holder that does not cover the entire length of the blade.

Sharpening Steels

1. Do not use a sharpening steel that is not equipped with a protective disc at the hilt.

Meat Tubs (gondola tubs, square tubs, cooking tubs)

 1. Do not stand on a meat tub or use it as a work platform.

 2. Use meat tubs for moving meat products and inedible products.

 3. Use the wheel locking lever of the meat tub to lock the wheels of the tub to prevent movement while placing or removing items.

Meat Trees

 1. Do not use load hooks that are cracked, corroded, bent, or broken.

 2. Do not place your hands between the hook and the product when placing the product on the meat tree.

 3. Do not place the product at the point of the hook. Set the load in the bowel of the hook.

Vacuum Packing Machines (cry-o-vac)

 1. Replace the guards before starting the vacuum packing machine and after cleaning or performing maintenance to the machine.

 2. Do not remove, alter, or bypass any safety guards or devices when operating the vacuum packing machine.

 3. Turn the vacuum packing machine off when you finish using it.

Racks and Shelves - (box racks, tray racks)

 1. If a rack starts to fall, let it fall; do not try to catch it.

 2. Grip racks from the inside rather than the outside.

 3. When loading trays or unloading trays on racks, load racks starting from the bottom rack and unload starting from the top rack.

 4. Use rack stops on all racks to prevent them from rolling.

 5. Return all excess racks to the rack storage room.

SHIPPING/RECEIVING PERSONNEL

Refrigerated Warehousing

 1. Wear warm clothing such as earmuffs, hats, gloves, and coats when working in freezers or refrigerated trucks.

 2. Do not use pallets or skids that are cracked or split or that have other visible damage.

 3. Do not close refrigeration doors without visually verifying that no one else is approaching the doorway.

Hand Trucks

 1. Tip the load slightly forward so that the tongue of the hand truck goes under the load.

 2. Keep the center of gravity of the load as low as possible by placing heavier objects below the lighter objects.

 3. When loading hand trucks, keep your feet clear of the wheels.

 4. Do not try to catch the load if it is falling or slipping. Get out of the way.

 5. Do not walk backward with the hand truck unless you are going up stairs or ramps.

 6. When going down an incline, keep the hand truck in front of you so that it can be always controlled.

 7. Move hand trucks at a walking pace.

 8. Store hand trucks with the tongue under a pallet or shelf.

Pallet Jacks

 1. Only employer authorized personnel may operate pallet jacks.

 2. Do not exceed the manufacturer's load rated capacity. Read the lift capacity plate on the pallet jack if you are unsure.

 3. Do not ride on pallet jacks.

 4. Start and stop gradually to prevent the load from slipping.

 5. Pull manual pallet jacks; push them when going down an incline or passing close to walls or obstacles.

 6. If your view is obstructed, use a spotter to assist in guiding the load.

 7. Stop the pallet jack if anyone gets in your way.

 8. Do not place your feet under the pallet jack when it is moving.

 9. Keep your feet and other body parts clear of the pallet before releasing the load.

Forklifts

 General Rules

 1. Do not use the forklift if any of the following conditions exist:

 • The mast has broken or cracked weld-points.

 • Forks are unequally spaced, or cracks exists along the blade or at the heels.

 • Hydraulic lines and fittings have excessive wear or are crimped.

 • Fluid is leaking from the lift or the tilt cylinders.

 • Batteries have cracks or holes, uncapped cells, frayed cables, broken cable insulation, loose connections, or clogged vent caps.

 2. Do not exceed the lift capacity of the forklift. Read the lift capacity plate on the forklift if you are unsure.

 3. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines concerning changes in the lift capacity before adding an attachment to a forklift.

 Starting the Forklift

1. Apply the foot brake and shift gears to neutral before turning the key.

 Driving Rules

 1. Do not raise or lower a load while you are in route. Wait until you are in the loading area and have stopped before raising or lowering the load.

 2. Drive at a walking pace and apply brakes slowly to stop when driving on slippery surfaces such as icy or wet floors.

 3. Do not drive over objects in your pathway.

 4. Do not drive into an area with a ceiling height that is lower than the height of the mast or overhead guard.

 5. Do not drive along the edge of an unguarded elevated surface such as a loading dock or staging platform.

 6. Sound the horn when approaching blind corners, doorways, or aisles to alert other operators and pedestrians.

 7. Drive in reverse and use a signal person when your vision is blocked by the load.

 8. Look in the direction that you are driving; proceed when you have a clear path.

 9. Drive loaded forklifts forward up ramps.

 10. Drive loaded forklifts in reverse when driving down a ramp.

 11. Drive unloaded forklifts in reverse when going up a ramp and forward when going down a ramp.

 Picking up a Load

 1. "Square up" on the center of the load and approach it straight on with the forks in the travel position.

 2. Stop when the tips of your forks are about a foot from the load.

 3. Level the forks and slowly drive forward until the load is resting against the backrest of the mast.

 4. Lift the load high enough to clear whatever is under it.

 5. Back up about one foot, then slowly tilt the mast backwards to stabilize the load.

Putting a Load Down

 1. Square up and stop about one foot from desired location.

 2. Level the forks and drive to the loading spot.

 3. Slowly lower the load to the floor.

 4. Tilt the forks slightly forward so that you do not hook the load.

 5. When the path behind you is clear of obstructions, back straight out until the forks have cleared the pallet.

 Shutting Off the Forklift

1. Lower the mast completely, turn off the engine and set the parking brake before leaving your forklift.

Loading Docks

 1. Keep the forklift clear of the dock edge while vehicles are backing up to the dock.

 2. Do not begin loading until the truck has come to a complete stop, the engine has been turned off, the dock lock has been engaged and the wheels have been chocked.

 3. Attach the bridge or dock plate before driving the forklift into the truck.

 4. Carry loads low enough to clear ammonia refrigerant lines when driving in the freezers and when loading a refrigerated truck.

 5. Do not drive the forklift into a truck bed that has soft or loose decking or other unstable flooring.

 6. Drive straight across the bridge plates when entering or exiting the trailer.

 7. Use dock lights or headlights when working in a dark trailer.

 8. Wear warm clothing such as earmuffs, hats, gloves, and coats when working in refrigerated trucks.

 9. Do not close refrigeration doors without visually verifying that no one else is in the truck trailer.

 10. Tie down hanging carcasses to the truck bed floor to prevent swinging.

Truck Drivers - supply trucks, cattle trucks

 1. Maintain a three-point contact using both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand when climbing into and out of vehicles.

 2. Shut all doors and fasten your seat belt before moving the vehicle.

 3. Always obey all traffic patterns and signs.

 4. Make wide turns around corners.

 Fueling Vehicles

 1. Turn the vehicle off before fueling.

 2. Do not smoke while fueling a vehicle.

 3. Wash your hands with soap and water if you spill gasoline on them.

MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

Hand Tools

 1. Transport hand tools only in toolboxes or tool belts. Do not carry tools in your clothing.

 2. Do not use a tool if its handle has splinters, burrs, cracks, or if the head of the tool is loose.

 3. Do not use impact tools such as hammers, chisels or punches that have "mushroomed" heads.

 4. When using knives, shears, or other cutting tools, cut in a direction away from your body.

 5. Do not perform "make-shift" repairs to tools.

 6. Do not throw tools from one location to another, from one employee to another or from elevated platforms

 7. Use tied off containers to keep tools from falling from elevated work platforms.

Electrical Safety

 1. Turn off electrical tools and disconnect the power source from the outlet before attempting repairs or service work. Tag the tool "Out of Service".

 2. Turn the tool off before plugging or unplugging it.

 3. Disconnect the tool from the outlet by pulling on the plug, not the cord.

 4. Do not use cords that have splices, exposed wires, and frayed ends, or that have the ground prong removed or broken off.

 5. Do not use an adapter such as a cheater plug that eliminates the ground.

 6. Do not run extension cords through doorways, through holes in ceilings, walls, or floors.

Bench Grinders

 1. Do not use a grinding wheel that has chips, cracks, or grooves.

 2. Do not grind on the side of an abrasive wheel labeled "Type 1".

 3. Do not try to stop the wheel with your hand.

 4. Prior to installing a new grinding wheel, inspect the wheel for cracks or other visible damage; tap the wheel gently with a plastic screwdriver handle to detect cracks that are not visible. If the wheel has a dead sound rather than a ring sound, do not use the wheel.

 5. Do not install a grinding wheel whose labeled RPM speed is lower than the rated speed of the grinder.

 6. Remove knives which have been ground to a "stiletto" blade from service.

Obtained from Toolboxtopics.com, Meat Packing, https://www.toolboxtopics.com/menu\_programs.html (Accessed August 14, 2024).