

Canadian Cattle Transport Regulations



In February of 2020, several Canadian regulations focusing on the transportation of animals were changed.

The most significant change was the length of time that animals can be transported. This sheet reviews the highlights of these regulations and how they relate to each type/age of cattle.



Calves

Young Ruminants

A calf is considered a young ruminant when they are too young to be fed exclusively hay and grain. This group of calves cannot be transported longer than 12 hours.

Conditions for calves that are 8 days of age or less

The following conditions must be met if calves that are 8 days of age or less are going to be shipped on a trailer.

Calves must:

- Be loaded and unloaded individually
- Have ample space to lie down
- Be segregated from animals that are older than 8 days of age
- Not be transported to an assembly centre (including auction markets and assembly yard)
- Not be reloaded after they have been unloaded at their final destination
- **The time from start of loading to the end of unloading must be less than 12 hours**

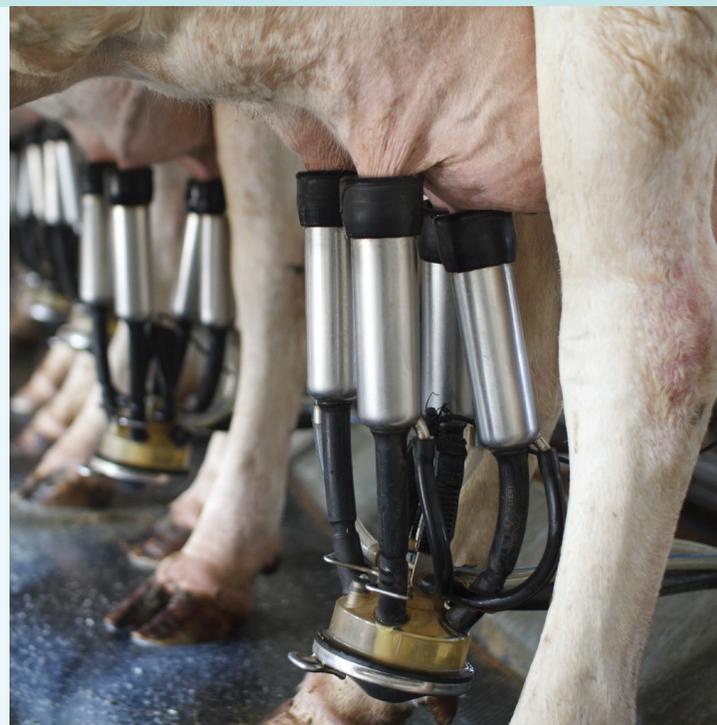
Dairy Cattle

Some important changes for transportation of dairy cattle include:

- **36 hours:** The length of time cattle that can be fed exclusively hay and grain can be transported without access to feed and water
- **12 hours:** The maximum length of time compromised cattle (**see next page**) can be transported
- **8 hours:** The minimum rest period for cattle that have been traveling for 36 hours must be given before being reloaded on a truck

Transporting Lactating Cows

Lactating animals cannot be loaded unless they are milked to prevent engorgement of the udder (i.e. twice a day).



Other Important Changes

Compromised Animals

An animal with one or more of the following conditions may be considered compromised.

A compromised animal that:

- Are bloated but showing no signs of discomfort or weakness
- Have acute frostbite
- Are blind in both eyes
- Are not be fully healed after a procedure
- May be lame in a single limb and can walk on all its legs
- Have a minor vaginal or rectal prolapse
- Have a condition that reduces its ability to withstand transport
- Have mobility limited by a device applied to its body such as hobbles

A compromised animal cannot be transported unless it is:

- Isolated from other animals
- Loaded and unloaded individually without the use of ramps
- Transported directly to the nearest location where it can be humanely killed or receive care
(compromised animals cannot go to an assembly yard)
- Transported for a maximum time of 12 hours

Unfit for Transport

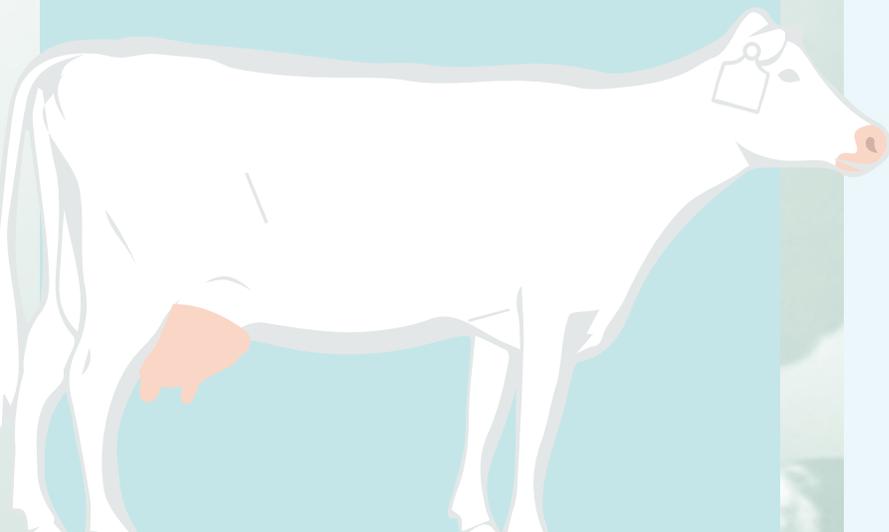
If one or more of the following conditions are present, an animal is considered unfit.

It cannot be shipped if it:

- Is a non-ambulatory/downer cow
- Has a fracture that impedes mobility or causes pain
- Is lame on one or more limbs and exhibits signs of pain, halted movements or reluctance to walk
- Is in shock or dying
- Has a prolapsed uterus or severe rectal or vaginal prolapse
- Shows signs of a generalized nervous system disorder
- Has difficulty breathing
- Has a severe open wound or laceration
- Is extremely thin [body condition score (**BCS**) < 2]
- Is clinically dehydrated
- Is hypo- or hyper- thermic
- Has a severe hernia
- Is in the last 10% of its gestation or has given birth in the past 48 hours
- Has an unhealed or infected navel
- Has gangrenous mastitis
- Is bloated with signs of discomfort or weakness
- Is exhausted
- Has any other conditions would cause suffering during transport

An unfit animal can only be transported:

- When a veterinarian recommends that the animal be transported to receive veterinary care, to a location where it can receive veterinary care





Additional Requirements

Assessment and Monitoring of Risk Factors Related to Transport

Prior to transport, animals need to be assessed to ensure they are capable of withstanding the transportation process.

Specific items to assess include:

- The condition of the animal and any pre-existing conditions the animal may have had
- How frequently the animal requires milking. Lactating animals may be shipped as long as they are able to:
 - Arrive at their destination/slaughter before udder engorgement
 - Be milked if need be, at auction or elsewhere in order to continue and finish transport without becoming engorged
 - Have a process which is set up/referenced in order to
 - manage/monitor these animals when needed
 - If the above cannot be managed or animal has other conditions that hinder its condition, then it must be shipped as a compromised animal
- Space requirements
 - Ensure animal is able to stand at all times with all feet on the floor, with head elevated, with sufficient space to permit full range of head movement, and without any body parts coming into contact with the trailer roof
- Compatibility of the animal with any other animal
 - Specific considerations for calves less than 8 days of age and compromised cattle
- Proper animal handling
 - Use appropriate methods to move cattle
 - Electric prods should only be used in extreme situations, such as when an animal's safety is at risk. You must never use electric prods on the face, anus, or reproductive organs of dairy cattle. **You should never use electric prods on calves that you can move manually**
- Approximate amount of time they will be in transit
 - These regulations are based on the maximum time without feed, water, and rest
- Delays and weather conditions

The Bottom Line

The Canadian government and dairy industry are making changes to ensure optimal animal health and welfare. These changes help to outline the specific conditions and requirements that must be followed to ensure optimal care of these animals.



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