

Safe System of Work — Animal Care and Cleaning

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Holding CPH	46/327/7111
Status	Template — complete, approve and issue before use
Review	Annually and after any incident or material change

Purpose and authorisation

Applies to routine feeding, watering, visual health checks, bedding, enclosure cleaning and waste removal for cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas and poultry. Only trained and authorised people may work independently. New volunteers remain directly supervised until signed competent.

Before starting

- Sign in, tell the supervisor your location/task and review animal-specific notes.
- Wear closed protective footwear, suitable clothing and task-specific gloves/PPE. Cover cuts.
- Check gates, latches, escape routes, lighting, tools and ground conditions. Remove defective equipment from use.
- Do not start if an animal is distressed/aggressive, the enclosure cannot be secured, or safe separation is unavailable.
- Never work alone with cattle, alpacas or any animal identified as unpredictable.

Safe method

Step	Required safe system
1. Prepare	Gather feed/tools before opening gates. Keep public and unrelated animals away. Avoid manual handling beyond your capability; use barrows or team lift.
2. Secure/separate	Follow enclosure-specific instructions. Use gates, hurdles and feeding barriers. Never trap yourself between an animal and a fixed object.
3. Feed/water	Use only labelled feed and measured amounts. Check water cleanliness and function. Do not hand-feed unless the approved procedure permits it.
4. Observe	From a safe position check appetite, gait, breathing, wounds, droppings and behaviour. Report changes immediately; do not diagnose or medicate unless authorised.
5. Clean	Remove animals or create secure separation. Ventilate. Wet dusty material where appropriate. Use long-handled tools; work away from the body; never mix chemicals.
6. Waste/bedding	Place waste in designated area. Avoid overfilling barrows. Keep clear of muck-store edges and vehicle routes.
7. Finish	Return tools, disinfect shared equipment, remove PPE safely, wash hands and forearms, close gates, log work and sign out.

Species-specific minimum controls

Animals	Minimum controls
Cattle	Use suitable handling facilities; no lone working; never turn your back in a confined space; avoid entering among feeding animals.
Sheep/goats	Use hurdles; do not catch by fleece, horns or legs; beware rams/bucks and crowding at feed.
Alpacas	Avoid standing directly behind; use calm group handling; do not wrap lead ropes around hands.
Poultry	Control doors; protect against pecks/scratches; dampen dust; use respiratory protection if assessment requires; isolate sick birds.

Cleaning substances and emergencies

- Follow product label, COSHH assessment and dilution instructions; keep chemicals locked and in original labelled containers.
- For injury, escape, fire, exposure or animal collapse: stop, make the area safe without personal risk, alert the supervisor, call 999/vet as appropriate, provide first aid within competence and record the event.

Competence sign-off

Volunteer	Trainer	Observed competent for	Signature/date