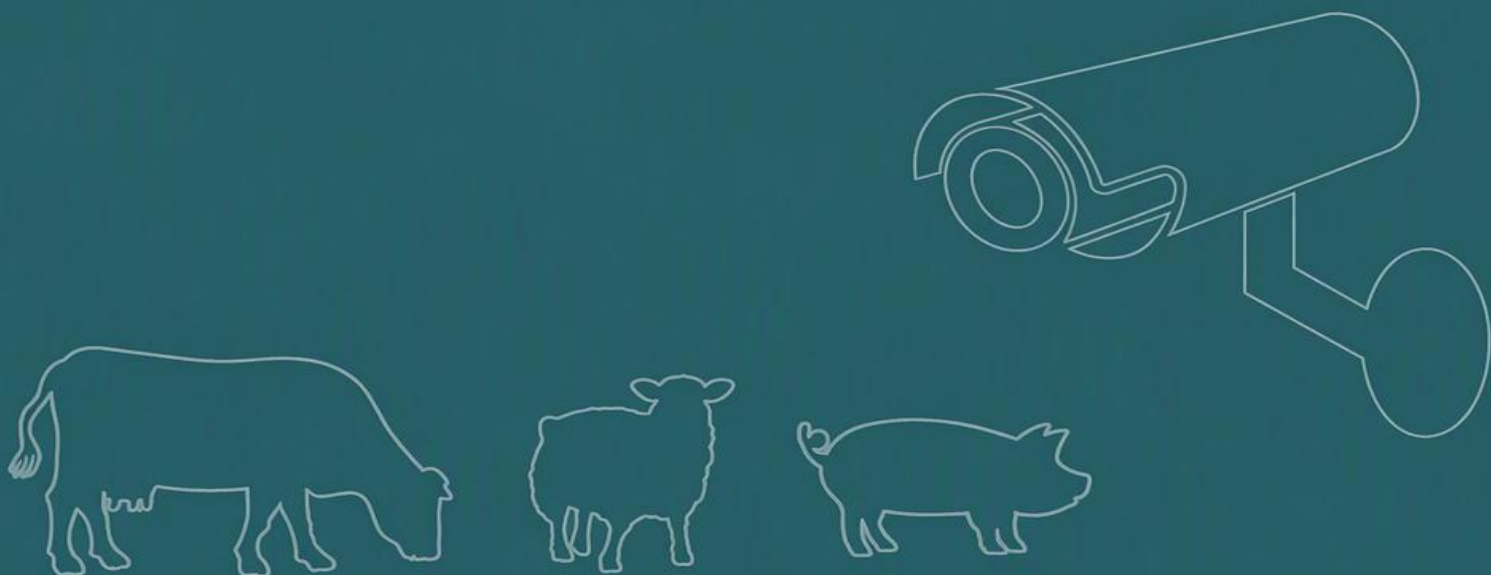




Guidance on the Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of
**Fairmin, Environment
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Guidance on the Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

This guidance has been prepared to support business operators' compliance with the requirements of the Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 ("the CCTV Regulations"). This document is not legal advice and should be read alongside the Regulations and other applicable animal welfare requirements.

Introduction

1. This guidance is intended to help you understand your obligations and to support your compliance with the CCTV Regulations. It does not replace the legal duties set out in the CCTV Regulations and does not provide a definitive interpretation of the law. You should seek independent legal advice if required.
2. The CCTV Regulations operate together with Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 and the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (WATOK).
3. In summary, as a business operator you must:
 - Install and operate a CCTV system that provides a complete and clear image of killing and related operations in all areas where live animals are present;

- Retain CCTV images and information for 90 days from the date recorded; and
- Provide access to the CCTV system and recordings to inspectors for viewing, copying or seizure, when required.

When you need to comply

4. The CCTV Regulations come into operation in two stages:
 - a) Regulations 1 to 4 (installation, operation and retention of CCTV images) came into operation on 1 August 2026; and
 - b) Regulations 5 to 11 (inspection/seizure powers, enforcement notices and appeals, offences and penalties) come into operation on 1 February 2027.
5. You may install and begin operating CCTV before the enforcement provisions commence, and you should aim to be fully compliant by 1 February 2027, when Regulations 5 to 11 come into operation.
6. Existing Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014, (WATOK), and Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 requirements will continue to apply. Inspectors may already use existing powers under WATOK (NI) 2014 to inspect, copy or seize relevant records, including CCTV recordings where installed.

Duty to install and operate a CCTV system



7. You must ensure that a CCTV system is installed and in operation by 1 August 2026 that provides a complete and clear image of killing and related operations in all areas of the slaughterhouse where live animals are present.
8. Your cameras should cover, as applicable to your premises, areas where animals are:
 - unloaded and moved into the lairage;
 - kept (lairage/holding pens);
 - handled, moved, and restrained;
 - stunned (including gas stunning systems, where used);
 - bled and killed; and
 - subject to any other “related operations” where live animals are present.
9. Position cameras to minimise blind spots. Cameras that pan, tilt or zoom can be helpful, but should not be relied on alone where this would leave gaps in continuous coverage.
10. The CCTV system must be operational and kept in good working order at all times when live animals are present, including any delivery or movement of animals outside normal working hours.
11. Images should be sufficiently clear to monitor activities and animal-welfare compliance. Where lighting is poor, you should consider additional lighting or infra-red capability.
12. You should keep cameras clean, protected from damage and maintained regularly. A planned maintenance schedule is recommended.

13. The system must be capable of producing images for inspection and seizure without interrupting the operation and must process those images without degrading their quality compared with the originals.
14. If any part of the system fails, you should act immediately to restore compliant coverage. Depending on the circumstances, failure to address faults promptly may lead to enforcement action.

Technical specification (good practice)

15. The CCTV Regulations do not prescribe technical specifications. When selecting, installing or upgrading equipment, you should consider recognised standards for video surveillance systems and ensure the system can meet the duties in the CCTV Regulations and section 3 and the retention/access duties as outlined further down this guidance.
16. As a practical guide, your system should be capable of:
- continuous recording where living animals are present
 - producing recordings as close to real-time as practicable
 - exporting footage without interrupting ongoing recording
 - securely storing footage for the full 90-day retention period; and
 - providing playback and export in a format that preserves original quality.
17. If you use a third-party provider (for example, cloud storage or managed CCTV services), you remain responsible for meeting the legal duties and ensuring inspectors can access recordings without delay.

18. You can find details of British Standards for CCTV installations at the following website: [Recommended standards for the surveillance camera industry - GOV.UK](#)

Duty to retain CCTV images or information

19. You must retain and store any images or information obtained by the CCTV system for 90 days beginning with the date recorded.

20. Your storage arrangements must maintain the integrity and quality of the retained images/information. In practice, you should:

- ensure sufficient storage capacity for peak throughput and higher-activity days
- prevent unauthorised deletion or alteration
- maintain clear audit trails of access, export and deletion
- back up critical components where needed to maintain continuous compliance.

21. You must nominate staff (for example, your Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) and a deputy) who can locate, play back and export recordings. Ensure access credentials (passwords, codes, encryption keys) are available on site to enable timely access.

22. Once the 90-day period has passed, recordings may be deleted.

Access for inspectors: inspection and seizure



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23. Inspectors who enter premises for the purpose of executing and enforcing WATOK and Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 requirements and the CCTV Regulations may inspect the CCTV system and any recordings.
24. You must provide access, assistance and any required documents, images or information without delay. Inspectors may, among other powers:
- view live or stored images/information
 - require production of recordings and related records
 - copy or seize images/information; and
 - where necessary, seize CCTV equipment (including computers and associated equipment) for the purpose of copying images/information.
25. Inspectors must provide a written receipt for any seized items and return them as soon as reasonably practicable, except items required as evidence. On the completion of court proceedings, if the items are not subject to a court order, the items will be returned as soon as is reasonably practicable.
26. Consider maintaining spare storage media or contingency arrangements so that recording can continue if equipment is removed for evidential purposes. If you cannot maintain compliant recording, you may be at risk of enforcement action.

Enforcement notices

27. If an inspector considers that there has been or there is a contravention of the CCTV Regulations, they may serve an enforcement notice:
- specifying the steps to remedy a contravention,
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- requiring you to reduce the rate of operation of the slaughterhouse until steps are taken, or
- prohibiting specified activities/processes or use of equipment until steps are taken.

28. An enforcement notice will include:

- inspector's statement that a person has contravened the CCTV Regulations
- date and time of the notice
- the recipient's name
- identification of the contravention(s)
- specify the steps to remedy the contravention(s)
- the timeframe to remedy the contravention(s)
- right to appeal and timeframe to lodge the appeal

29. Any costs that result from an enforcement notice must be met by the person receiving the notice. If the enforcement notice is not complied with, an inspector may arrange for the issue to be solved, at the expense of the person on whom the notice is served.

30. Where an inspector is satisfied you have taken the required steps; they must serve a completion notice. An inspector may vary or withdraw an enforcement notice in writing.

Appeals

31. If you are aggrieved by:



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- a) the decision to serve an enforcement notice or
- b) a refusal to issue a completion notice

you may appeal to a court of summary jurisdiction in accordance with Part 7 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

32. An appeal must be made within one month of the date on which the inspector serves notice of the decision on the person bringing the appeal.

33. The court may make any order it thinks is appropriate. Unless that decision is appealed, the Department must follow the court's order.

Notices

34. Notices under the CCTV Regulations may be served by delivering to the person, leaving at the proper address, or sending by post.

35. In certain circumstances, if the occupier's name and address cannot be ascertained after reasonable inquiry, a notice may be served by affixing it conspicuously to the premises or an object on the premises.

Offences and penalties

36. It is an offence to contravene the duties to install and operate a CCTV system (regulation 3), to retain CCTV images or information (regulation 4), or to fail to comply with an enforcement notice issued under regulation 6.

37. It is also an offence to intentionally obstruct an inspector, to fail without reasonable cause to provide assistance, information or access without delay,

to provide false or misleading information, or to fail to produce documents or recordings without delay when required.

38. A person guilty of an offence under regulations 9 or 10 is liable in the Magistrates' Court to a fine not exceeding £5,000.

Data protection and privacy

39. Where CCTV recordings contain images or audio of identifiable people, the data controller (that is you, as the business operator) must make sure that this personal data is processed in line with data protection requirements.

40. CCTV recordings are likely to include personal data (for example, images of employees, contractors and visitors). You must comply with applicable data protection law when operating CCTV, including the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

41. Key practical steps include:

- be clear about the purposes for CCTV (including the statutory requirement for animal welfare monitoring)
- provide clear signage and information to staff and visitors (for example, privacy notices) explaining that CCTV is in use
- restrict access to recordings to authorised staff and maintain access logs
- keep recordings secure in storage and during export/transfer
- have processes for handling requests from individuals (for example, subject access requests), while protecting the rights of others



42. Depending on your arrangements and risks, you may need to complete a Data protection impact assessment (DPIA). The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provides guidance and templates at the following website:

[Information Commissioner's Office](#)

43. If you use a CCTV supplier or managed service, ensure contracts address data protection responsibilities, security measures, retention and deletion controls, and the ability to provide access to inspectors without delay.

Further information

44. For queries about the CCTV Regulations, contact the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) at animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk



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