

### Public Walkways, Animal Feeding and Contact Areas

Health and Safety legislation requires you to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of visitors to your attraction, “so far as is reasonably practicable.” It is considered reasonable that adequate provisions be available for the public to maintain a reasonable level of hygiene when attending the attraction and taking part in the various activities you offer. It is also reasonable that you identify when they may be at risk and that you apply very simple risk reduction measures:

1. Remove the risk totally if possible.
2. Take necessary steps to reduce the impact of the risk if it cannot be removed.
3. Inform the public of the risks that remain and what they need to do to prevent exposure.
4. Ensure you have the facilities for them to carry out the measures.
5. Take adequate steps to remind the public of the need for vigilance and cooperation.
6. Constantly monitor your provisions to ensure the provisions are always available and operational.

There is a simple rule of thumb that must be introduced to ensure you comply with your obligations, particularly where hygiene is concerned. **IF THE CONTROL MEASURE IS NOT AVAILABLE OR HAS FAILED, THEN THE ACTIVITY, WHATEVER IT MAY BE, MUST NOT TAKE PLACE.**

Specific guidance has been written by the industry and HSE regarding the necessary hygiene controls in feeding and petting areas. This resulted in an industry Code of Practice which you should now apply. A copy of the code can be downloaded from the NFAN website <http://www.farmattractions.net/nfan-resources/code-practice/>

Although the Code of Practice concentrates on Zoonosis the controls outlined are effective for other infections that can be contracted when contacting animals and animal faeces. Most at risk from infection are young children and the elderly, although it is possible that other people can be affected if they have some other underlying medical condition.

When setting out the activities at your attraction you must decide what you want and how you are going to deliver it, including how you intend to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The first decision is whether you are going to allow animal contact or become a noncontact farm attraction. Non Contact is by far the safest option, but it does remove some of the reasons why families come to the attraction in the first place, and it may deter them from attending. There is a balance between allowing controlled contact and offering good hygiene facilities. By applying some very important basic rules, you can ensure you achieve your aims and what is considered Best Practice.

**The measures highlighted BOLD are essential to maintaining legal compliance and achieving the standards required.**

1. **You must complete a risk assessment for this area of your activity and either have completed the installation of control measures or you can demonstrate a planned delivery of the controls.**
2. **No member of the public is allowed to enter an animal pen where there is deep litter or contaminated bedding.**
3. **No animal contact is allowed in walkways where you do not allow animal contact, play or food consumption areas. All such areas must be double fenced.**
4. **Animal contact must only be possible in purpose designed petting areas with adequate provisions for hand washing.**
5. **No liquid run off or faecal material from the pens must enter the public areas.**

6. Design your activities to take place without the need to enter an animal enclosure. It is possible for instance, to allow children to collect eggs without entering the area occupied by the chickens.
7. **All animal Contact Activities must be supervised and in an area with proper provision of hand washing facilities. Animal feeding areas should be supported by signage reminding the public to wash their hands.**
8. **All entrances and exits from designated feeding or petting areas must have a hand wash station fitted with running water and liquid soap. The use of paper towels is also desirable as it provides another opportunity to remove debris from the hands.**
9. Hand wash stations should be at suitable heights for young children as well as adults.
10. **Wherever possible, warm water should be provided at a temperature of around 28°. It is found that the quoted 43° is too hot for young children and will result in them not wanting to use the facility. Warm water must be available at the main hand washing points.**
11. **Hand Gels are not considered suitable as a primary and adequate bacterial control measure. They must be considered as an additional measure to proper hand washing.**
12. Regular cleaning of hand wash facilities to be carried out throughout the day.
13. **Hand wash stations must be suitably designed with troughs or sinks large enough to facilitate hands.**
14. **Hand wash stations must be very visible with signage reminding the public to wash their hands when leaving the petting or contact area. It is recommended that signage be pictorial.**
15. **All gates and fences in contact areas should be inspected daily for faecal material. All faecal material must be removed and cleaned to avoid public contamination.**
16. **Signage placed around the attraction reminding the public not to eat, drink or smoke whilst walking in contact areas, or put fingers in mouths unless they have very recently been properly washed.**
17. Ensure you have information for visitors with a balanced description of the risks of infection and the measures required. The information should also point out where hand washing facilities can be found, and how to recognise them.
18. **Do not allow any animals or domestic fowl to stray into the attraction's clean areas. Should this accidentally happen ensure a cleaning regime is identified and implemented in all cases.**
19. Have a management plan for large parties or school visits that controls the number of people visiting each contact location at any one time. Agree this plan with the visiting leader before the tour or visit starts.
20. **Ensure that locations where animal cross over internal public walkways are kept to an absolute minimum, and the crossing point is as narrow as possible. A thorough cleaning regime must be carried out to remove any faecal material where the public walk.**
21. **Animal movements must be controlled and planned. They must, wherever possible, be kept to times when the public are not on site, or you have physically restrained the public from approaching near the crossing point until after the animal movement is completed and the crossing point cleaned of all faecal material.**
22. Any public footpaths that enter the attraction site should be managed. The simple recommendations are:
  - Erect signs at each point where the public footpath enters the property informing the footpath user that hygiene controls apply on this farm attraction, and you request them to keep the designated foot path.

- Fence the footpath to restrain the footpath user from straying into areas where you do not want them to go. Consider double fencing as this will deter the footpath user from trying to contact the animals.
- Plan and erect an animal crossing point at a suitable point in the fencing.
- Fix a bridging walkway, which can be removed when animal movements are required, across the designated crossing point you have placed in the fence line to assist the public to cross without walking on the ground where animals have walked.

You can achieve these requirements by:

- a) Sensibly planning your attraction to ensure the public are routed away from those locations where work is carried out, manure is stored, or animals are treated.
- b) Carry out a risk assessment of contact and noncontact areas to ensure you have removed the possibility of infection from your animals or facilities.
- c) Making sure there is enough hand washing facilities available when the public leave each contact area. You can calculate the number of hand wash stations by multiplying the peak number of people that leave the contact area every 15 minutes by 2 [*the average time that it takes to wash hands thoroughly*] and then finally divide it by 15. That will arrive at a suggested number of hand wash stations you may need. Small queues are acceptable after some contact activities, but, if possible, manage the contact activity to allow for a gradual finishing which will reduce the queues to a sensible, manageable size.
- d) Making sure you provide a handwash station near the exit of the attraction.
- e) Making sure that a hand wash station is located very near eating areas.
- f) Making sure the hand wash stations are visible, are kept clean and do not deter their use by their appearance.
- g) Double fencing the noncontact areas to signify and deter the public from reaching and touching animals or faeces.
- h) Designing your feeding stations so that the public do not have to enter the area where bedding or faeces are present.
- i) Training staff on how to approach the public and encourage the hand wash regime. It is doubly important for your staff to be seen to apply the hand wash regime and thereby set an example.

There are some additional considerations that must be thought about when planning your provisions.

- Sufficient water storage or supply to ensure continuity to hand washes stations on a busy day.
- Sufficient drainage capacity to deal with the output from the hand wash stations on a busy day.
- Standing areas where hand washing will take place not becoming slippery if spillage occurs.
- Young children being able reach the hand wash basin.
- Providing taps that are easily operated. It is highly recommended that you select taps that will not require contact to turn them off. Non Concussive Taps are designed so that you only push the top down to receive the water. They turn themselves off, usually after 9 seconds or so. This type of tap is also extremely successful for water conservancy as they cannot be left on.
- Selection of liquid soap that is effective in both warm and cold water as you will not be able to always guarantee warm water availability throughout the day.
- Regular cleaning and bin emptying throughout the day.

### Risk Assessment

Most of contact activities will carefully risk assessment process and will need to be further broken down as to whether the activity is carried out by staff or public.

The risk levels to adults will in some cases be different to your children or the elderly. They will certainly differ when considering your staff completing a task and that of the public.

All risk assessments must meet the meet the HSE criteria as Suitable and Sufficient.

The phrase “suitable and sufficient” is not defined in legislation, but it is suggested that to meet the criteria the risk assessment should “identify the risks arising from or in connection with work”, be “appropriate to the nature of the work” and include what an employer could reasonably be expected to know (i.e. foreseeability).

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not produce specific guidance on how to determine if a risk assessment is suitable and sufficient. However, the following questions may assist.

- Are all the steps in the risk assessment process completed?
- Does it focus on prevention and organisational level solutions?
- Does the risk assessment identify the aspects of the work, organisation or environment that are known to be risk factors?
- Does the approach highlight the extent and nature of the gap, if any, between the current situation and what is seen as good practice?
- Is the workforce involved in the risk assessment process?
- Is there a procedure to develop and adopt solutions that are reasonably practicable?
- Is there adequate documentation detailing the process for the implementation, monitoring, and review of recommended actions?

In areas where zoonotic materials or bacteria may be a hazard, the risk assessment should identify where contact is:

- Likely.
- What the nature of contract may be.
- How contact is likely to occur.
- Whether cross contamination is probable or highly likely [particularly when near sick or injured animals].
- What controls measures will be applied.
- What information needs to be given to the public or staff member, and the method for passing that information on them.
- What PPE is compulsory or highly advisable.