

Understanding the Effluent Code

Managing effluent in the livestock supply chain

On 23 December, 2022, the 'Managing Effluent in the Livestock Supply Chain Registered Industry Code of Practice' – the Effluent Code – was endorsed for registration by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR). The Effluent Code serves as a practical guide to help livestock transporters and other parties in the livestock supply chain meet their primary duty and other obligations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) when managing livestock effluent during road transport.

The Effluent Code may also be used as admissible evidence in a proceeding in accordance with s.632 of the HVNL, as a Registered Industry Code of Practice establishes what is reasonably “known about a hazard or risk, risk assessment, or risk control” and “what is reasonably practicable” in meeting your primary duty obligations outlined in s.26C.

Why is the Effluent Code important?

If you are a party in a supply chain where livestock is transported, the Effluent Code outlines the risks of effluent loss in transit and the measures that are reasonably practicable to prevent it.

Purpose of the Effluent Code

Effluent is an unavoidable by-product when transporting livestock by road. Spillage not only constitutes a load restraint breach under HVNL but also poses significant risks to road users, pedestrians, cyclists and the environment, alongside potential reputational harm.

Historically, the focus of effluent management has been on carriers. The Effluent Code broadens this perspective, recognising the roles all parties play in managing effluent and providing guidance on what each party can reasonably do to prevent significant effluent loss.

PARTIES INVOLVED INCLUDE:

- Carriers
- Abattoirs
- Feedlots
- Livestock producers
- Farms
- Food processing plants

Effluent Code vs. Master Code

Shared principles with the Master Code:

- Both codes uphold the principles of the Chain of Responsibility (CoR).
- Parties with influences or control over transport activities have a primary duty to minimise public risks associated with heavy vehicle operations and must not encourage breaches of the law.
- Recognises that multiple parties influence the safety of heavy vehicles.

Key differences from the Master Code:

- The Effluent Code is specifically concerned with activities related to effluent management.
- Unlike the Master Code, the Effluent Code does not evaluate how other parties' actions impact speed, fatigue, mass, dimension, or vehicle standards.
- While the Effluent Code identifies key activities where duties exist, it does not attribute responsibilities to specific duty holders identified under HVNL. Instead, it acknowledges that multiple duty holders participate in each activity.



Activities in the Effluent Code

The Effluent Code details the known risks and practicable controls for managing effluent by identifying main activities in livestock transport and the required actions for involved parties:

CHOOSING A LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTER

- Select transporters who can help minimise spillage risks, have experience in transporting livestock, and comply with the requirements of the Land Transport Standards.
- Ensure vehicles are designed to minimise effluent spillage which may include effluent containment tanks.

PREPARING LIVESTOCK FOR TRANSPORT

- Assess the need for a green feed curfew to reduce spillage risk, and enforce that curfew where needed.
- Reduce livestock stress
- Provide 'Livestock Preparation Information' prior to loading.

FORMING CONTRACTS

- Include contract terms that assist in managing and reduce the risk of avoidable effluent load loss.

CHOOSING AND MANAGING A LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT VEHICLE

- Choose vehicles with adequate effluent containment based on the anticipated effluent production over the journey.
- Have a process that includes regularly emptying tanks, keeping trailers clean and ensuring drains are operational. Tanks are most effective when there is access to disposal facilities and clean water.

PLANNING AND SCHEDULING THE JOURNEY

- Develop and share Journey Plans, Livestock Spelling Plans and Route Variations if required.

LOADING LIVESTOCK

- Minimise stress and monitor loading densities for livestock comfort and vehicle stability.

TRANSPORTING LIVESTOCK

- Minimise effluent in trailers at journey start, ensure containment tanks are operational and follow Journey and Spelling Plans.
- Drive in a way that reduces the risk of effluent loss.

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT TRAINING AND DRIVER MONITORING

- Monitor whether drivers check tanks, dispose of effluent properly and monitor effluent accumulation.

For employed and contracted/subcontracted drivers:

- Provide training on effluent management, legal requirements and safety outcomes.
- Induct new drivers on handling techniques and containment systems.

MANAGING LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT DESTINATIONS

- Manage yarding times to minimise delays and provide water access, share transport preparation information and communicate hot spots and disposal/truck wash facilities.
- Ensure accurate information is received on how livestock has been prepared for transport.

ASSURANCE

- Monitor, record and assess incidents of significant spillage.
- Monitor effectiveness of procedures and equipment, and adjust accordingly, to reduce risks of spillage. Train employees/subcontractors in any changes.
- Provide feedback to the journey scheduler to help manage future risks.



For more information:

[Effluent Code of Practice](#)

[Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines - Land Transport](#)

