

Poultry Good Commercial Practices Verification Task Job Aid

Instructions: Review this Job Aid and policy documents, regulations, and inspection methodologies with a mentor.

Acronyms/Definitions

- Good Commercial Practices (GCP) – Handling birds in a manner that prevents needless injury and suffering.
- Cadavers – Poultry carcasses showing evidence of having died from causes other than slaughter.
- MOI – Memorandum of Interview

Task Overview

- IPP perform the Poultry GCP Verification task to verify establishments slaughter poultry in accordance with good commercial practices in a manner that will result in thorough bleeding of the carcasses and ensure that breathing has stopped before scalding ([9 CFR 381.65\(b\)](#)).
- Poultry carcasses showing evidence of having died from causes other than slaughter are considered adulterated and are to be condemned ([9 CFR 381.90](#)).
- From a regulatory perspective, adherence to GCP is a process control issue and not a bird-by-bird performance standard issue.
- Poultry are not subject to the livestock humane handling regulations.

Basic Procedure

- Schedule a Poultry GCP Verification task when the establishment slaughters.
- On a per-shift basis, observe conditions from **receiving through pre-scald** to determine whether establishment employees are mistreating or handling birds in a way that will cause death or injury or will prevent thorough bleeding or result in excessive bruising. ([FSIS Directive 6110.1](#) Sec. III., C.) For example:
 - Employees breaking birds' legs to hold them in the shackle or mishandling birds while transferring them from the cages to the shackles;
 - Birds frozen inside the cages or frozen to the cages in cold weather;
 - Birds dead or dying from heat exhaustion (heavy panting is the main symptom of heat stress in poultry).
 - **Note:** These examples do not necessarily describe prohibited activities and noncompliance but may still warrant documentation through an MOI.
- Once a week, randomly select a day to review establishment records documenting adherence to poultry GCP ([FSIS Directive 6110.1](#) Sec. III., B.).
 - **Note:** Establishments are not required to keep written or video surveillance GCP records. However, if establishments do keep records and make them available, IPP are to review a sample of the records (see [FSIS Directive 5000.9](#) for instructions on reviewing records created by video).
 - Assess whether the records provide evidence that the establishment is monitoring its GCP from receiving through pre-scald areas.

- If records do not exist, or do not provide a basis to determine whether the establishment is following GCP, make observations from receiving through pre-scald.
- Issue a **poultry mistreatment MOI** in the Poultry GCP Verification task when the establishment is mistreating birds, but the mistreatment event **does not** demonstrate a loss of process control by an establishment (e.g., isolated instances of poultry mistreatment like a single bird entering the scald tank while breathing).
 - If IPP observe poultry mistreatment, notify the establishment immediately.
 - Discuss the mistreatment with the establishment and advise them that preventing the mistreatment of poultry decreases the chances of producing adulterated carcasses.
 - Describe the observed mistreatment, any actions taken by the establishment, and its response to any discussion between establishment management and IPP regarding the event, in the poultry mistreatment MOI.
- Notify the establishment and **document a GCP NR** when the establishment has **lost process control** when there is **repeated occurrence** of:
 - Birds dying by means other than slaughter (e.g., repeatedly entering scald tank while breathing);
 - Birds not being appropriately bled out (e.g., equipment malfunction resulting in increased numbers of cadavers being disposed of or condemned);
 - Birds being intentionally and repeatedly mistreated by establishment personnel.
 - Cite 9 CFR 381.65(b) when the establishment is not following GCP and is not preventing these problems from reoccurring.

Note: An isolated instance does not represent a loss of process control. Document an isolated instance in a poultry mistreatment MOI (FSIS Directive 6110.1 Sec. IV., A.).

- Document findings and complete task in PHIS.

Discussion Points

- Discuss examples of instances that represent a loss of process control concerning GCP.

Knowledge Check

- When performing a Poultry GCP Verification task, where do IPP make observations of the establishment's GCP?
- How frequently do IPP review establishment records documenting the establishment's adherence to poultry GCP?

Resources

- FSIS Directive 6110.1 – *Verification of Poultry Good Commercial Practices*
- FSIS Directive 5000.9 – *Verifying Video or Other Electronic Monitoring Records*
- IM Workbook – Humane Handling Verification for Livestock and Good Commercial Practices for Poultry