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## What do tail lesions indicate?

- The aetiology and risk factors for tail lesions can be many.
- They can involve abnormal behaviour like biting, bacterial infections and can result in infections of the skin, underlying tissue and bones, and become necrotic with infection.
- Tail lesions are painful. 
- During transport, severe tail lesions may further deteriorate due to biting by other pigs. Pigs with severe lesions are not fit for transport.

## Legal requirements

Council Regulation (EC) **1/2005**: Requirements associated with wounds:

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 1.}: only fit animals shall be transported.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2.b}: unfit animals present severe open wounds, or prolapse.


{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.a}: no additional suffering for slightly injured or ill animals.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.b}: transportation of animals used for scientific purposes.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.c}: transportation under veterinary supervision for treatment or diagnosis.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.d}: transportation after veterinary procedures in relation to farming practices with completely healed wounds.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 4.}: separation, veterinary treatment and/or killing of animals falling ill or being injured during transport.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 5.}: use of sedatives. 

*Note: Listed requirements are paraphrasing the literal text of the regulation and are not comprehensive. Moreover, there might be stricter national legislation in place. For a more detailed description on the specific requirements, see the review "[Fitness for Transport](#)".*

## Inspection method (recommended)

- In case the planned journey is less than 8h, farmer and livestock driver have to assess fitness for transport before and during loading.
- In case the journey is more than 8 h, an official inspector has to be present at loading to assess fitness for transport of pigs.
- In either case, pigs will be assessed for **tail lesions**.
- The inspector reports findings to the farmer and/or livestock driver, and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation during loading and transport corrective actions are taken to ensure the situation complies with legal requirements in the future.

### Assessment – In general

The assessor must make a judgment on the likelihood of the wounds to cause pain and blood loss during transport, as well as possible further aggravation. To decide on fitness for transport, she or he will have to consider: Whether the wound is large, extensive or/and severe; Whether the wounds are multiple; Whether the wound is healed or not (see next page).



Pigs are assessed individually according to the proportion of damage to the tail.

### No risk to welfare: Intact tails

No evidence of tail lesions.



### Moderate risk to welfare: Minor wounds

Healed, mild lesions or evidence of chewing or puncture wounds, no swelling.



### High risk to welfare: Major wounds

Evidence of chewing or puncture wounds with swelling and signs of infection (left).

Partial loss of the tail with possible necrosis (middle).

Total loss of the tail with possible necrosis (right).



Source for the assessment method: Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Pigs



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EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare Pigs

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