





## What do hernias indicate?

- Hernia is the popular term for a series of different diagnoses, all identified by umbilical/inguinal outpouchings on the ventral aspect of the abdominal wall of pigs. True hernia describes the condition where the outpouching is filled by viscera.
- They indicate underlying pathology, e.g. cysts, abscesses and fibrosis.
- Hernias can be painful and limit the mobility of pigs.
- In the worst case, the outpouching may rupture, which is why pigs with severe hernias are not fit for transport. 

{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](#)".*

## Legal requirements

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

{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.

## 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 **hernias**.
- 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.



Hernias occur when there is protrusion of a bodily structure or organ through the wall that normally contains it, resulting in a lump under the skin in the umbilical or inguinal area.

A hernia is considered as a high risk to welfare if it is more than 15-20 cm wide and present sores.

All animals are observed from the front, back and side.

### Low risk to welfare

The hernia is smaller than 15-20 cm (weight depending), with no sores/lesions. The pig's overall well-being seems unaffected.



### Moderate risk to welfare

The hernia is larger than 15-20 cm (weight depending), with no sores/lesions. The pig's overall wellbeing could be affected.



### High risk to welfare

The hernia is larger than 15-20 cm (weight depending) with sores. The pig's overall wellbeing is affected.



Sources for the assessment method: Welfare Quality® Protocol and Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Pigs



EU Reference Centre  
for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding this factsheet please contact [info.pigs@eurcaw.eu](mailto:info.pigs@eurcaw.eu)