

***Code of
Professional Conduct
For
Registered Meat Hygiene
Inspectors***

First Version – Adopted 21/4/2012

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector

The Declaration

“I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that my constant endeavour as a Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector, will be to ensure consumer safety and the welfare of animals and that I will pursue the work of my profession with impartiality, integrity and accept my responsibilities to the consumer, the public, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.”

Code of Professional Conduct

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Introduction and guiding principles

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, through the Council of Meat Hygiene Inspectors, *regulates* the profession of meat hygiene inspection through the Veterinary Surgeons Act and Royal Charter, and Meat Hygiene Inspectors registered or listed with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons enjoy certain privileges.

The RCVS, Council of Meat Inspectors Code of Professional Conduct specifies the principles and responsibilities that guide Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors in their professional lives. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors have a variety of legal and professional responsibilities, including those to animals, consumers, the veterinary profession in general and each colleague in particular, the veterinary team, the RCVS and the general public.

Privileges and responsibilities go hand in hand. For this reason, on registration with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and in exchange for the privilege to practise meat hygiene inspection in the United Kingdom, since 1st January 2013, every Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector makes the declaration:

“I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that my constant endeavour as a Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector, will be to ensure consumer safety and the welfare of animals and that I will pursue the work of my profession with impartiality, integrity and accept my responsibilities to the consumer, the public, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.”

The overarching duty of Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors is to ensure the public health protection of the consumer and the welfare of animals to fulfil their professional duties, by maintaining:

- 1. Professional competence**
- 2. Honesty and integrity**
- 3. Independence and impartiality**
- 4. Confidentiality and trust**
- 5. Professional accountability**

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and the public

1. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must seek to ensure public health protection and must consider the impact of their actions on the public and the environment.
2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must report facts and professional opinions honestly and with due care.
3. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must ensure they (and their staff, as appropriate) are sufficiently familiar and comply with legislation relevant to the provision of meat hygiene services.
4. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession.

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors' responsibilities:

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and animals

(Animals, in this context, means any animal dealt with by a Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector acting in his or her professional capacity).

1. A Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector must:

- a)** Make animal welfare a key consideration
- b)** Treat all animals, of whatever species, humanely and with respect
- c)** Not cause or permit any animal to suffer;
 - i)** By permitting excessive restraint or discipline
 - ii)** By inhumane transportation, droving or driving to slaughter
 - iii)** By permitting a method of slaughter other than that allowed by legislation
 - iv)** By neglect

2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must report to an appropriate authority when there is reasonable concern that animal welfare has been, or is likely to be, compromised.

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and Food Business Operators

1. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors should respect the needs and requirements of the Food Business Operator, provided that they do not conflict with the principles of this Code or relevant legislation.
2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors should provide impartial, independent and objective advice.
3. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must be able to communicate effectively, using the English language in the UK, as appropriate to the audience and context.
4. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors should provide professional advice, as appropriate.
5. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must not breach Food Business Operator confidentiality unless there are overriding reasons in the public interest, including public health, animal health or welfare.
6. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors should keep clear, accurate and detailed records as required by their employer and/or the relevant legislation.
7. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors should, where possible, respond promptly, fully and courteously to Food Business Operators' complaints and criticism and where necessary, refer to a senior officer in the Association.

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and the profession

1. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must take and, at the request of the RCVS, Council for Meat hygiene Inspectors, demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to address adverse physical or mental health that could;

(i) Impair fitness to practise; or

(ii) That results in harm, or a risk of harm, to public health, public interest or to animal health or welfare.

2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors who are concerned that the health, performance or competence [subject to legal advice on RCVS jurisdiction] of another Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector or Official Veterinarian is impairing his or her fitness to practise, must take steps to ensure that public health is not put at risk and that the interests of public health, the welfare of animals and those of the said Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector or Official Veterinarian, are protected.

3. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors who have had a break of five years or more from active practice must undertake an appropriate period of retraining.

4. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must maintain and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their professional involvement and must undertake a minimum of 45 hours of appropriate CPD over any consecutive three-year period and keep an appropriate record of CPD undertaken.

5. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and Official Veterinarians must communicate with each other, as appropriate, to ensure that the interests of the consumer and animals or group of animals are protected when an ongoing issue is transferred between them.

6. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must conduct themselves in a manner that respects professional colleagues and must not maliciously, or unfairly, criticise or attempt to discredit a professional colleague.

7. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must not hold themselves out as having expertise they cannot substantiate, or call themselves a 'specialist' where to do so would be misleading or misrepresentative.

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and the veterinary team or business

1. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors with ownership or control of a business, or with management or other responsibilities associated with the meat hygiene team or business, have a greater responsibility to ensure professional colleagues, or staff within the organisation or practice, comply with responsibilities contained within this code.
2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors in leadership roles must ensure that there is appropriate management or supervision of the Meat Hygiene Team and appropriate support and assistance for newly registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors.
3. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must communicate with professional colleagues and staff within the meat hygiene team, to co-ordinate the delivery of meat hygiene services.
4. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors in leadership roles must only delegate tasks to those with the knowledge and skills and any relevant qualification necessary to undertake that task competently.
5. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors advertising their services must do so in a legal, truthful and professional manner.
6. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors in leadership roles must ensure that all their professional activities and those of relevant staff are covered by professional indemnity insurance or equivalent arrangements.

Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors and the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors

1. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must be appropriately registered with the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, and comply with the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors Code of Conduct for Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors.
2. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must provide the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, with their CPD record when requested to do so.
3. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must comply with reasonable requests from the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors as part of the regulation of Meat Hygiene Inspectors and the profession, and comply with any undertakings given to the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors.
4. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must respond promptly and constructively to any request from the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, or comments in relation to any allegation or complaint.
5. Post January 2013, Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors (and those applying to be registered as Meat Hygiene Inspectors) must disclose to the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, any subsequent caution or criminal conviction, or adverse finding by another regulator, whether in the UK, Europe or overseas.
6. Registered Meat Hygiene Inspectors must report to the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, those Meat Hygiene Inspectors removed from the RCVS, Council for Meat Hygiene Inspectors Register at the direction of the *Meat Hygiene Inspectors Disciplinary Committee* who undertake meat inspection duties.

