

OSH guidelines for sheep fasting times

Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSH) now recommends that sheep are fasted prior to shearing to:

- Reduce the risk of manual handling injuries from lifting heavy full sheep.
- Reduce the risk of shearers tripping on slippery floors.
- Reduce the chances of workers contracting leptospirosis from urine spray.
- Reduce pen staining of wool.

Recommended fasting times in hours

Age group	Min – no feed	Max – no feed	Min- no water	Max – no water
Ewes/rams				
non preg/non lact	18	32	12	24
late preg/lact.	18	30	12	24
Hoggets				
non preg/non lact	18	30	12	24
late preg/lact.	12	24	8	20
Lambs				
pre wean	6	24	6	20
weaned	12	24	8	20

Note: Exceeding these maximum times may trigger metabolic problems, especially in pregnant animals. Pregnant hoggets need special care. Unweaned lambs should stay with their mothers until the ewes enter the shearing shed.
