



Animal Care Tech Note

Attempted Inspections

The Animal Welfare Act Regulations require licensees and registrants to allow inspection of their facilities, records, and animals during business hours (7 a.m. to 7 p.m.).

An attempted inspection occurs when a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspector tries to inspect a facility that is licensed or registered under the Animal Welfare Act, but no one is available. When that happens, the inspector issues an attempted inspection report.

Because routine inspections are unannounced, we understand a licensee or registrant might not always be available. But there are ways to potentially avoid an attempted inspection. Follow the tips below to make sure you don't miss an inspection.

Tell Us How to Reach You

- Provide your inspector with relevant **contact information**, including your email address and cell and work phone numbers.
- When an inspector arrives at your facility, they will attempt to contact you using all the numbers and methods you provide. They will leave messages that they are at the facility for an inspection.
- Return their call as soon as possible and let them know whether you can make it back to the facility. The inspector can **wait up to 60 minutes** for you to arrive for the inspection. Or you can let them know you're not available so they can return another time.
- If the inspector doesn't hear from you **after 30 minutes**, they will leave the facility. They will send you an attempted inspection report by email or certified mail. They also may leave a note asking you to call when you return.
- **If you don't have a phone**, let us know how else to reach you. For example, we can check at a workshop or barn nearby, or contact another person who may know how to reach you. **We will not enter a private facility without a responsible adult.**



Tell Us When You're Typically Available

- Give us **optimal hours*** when you or your representative(s) are typically available. We'll try to conduct inspections during those times.
- Optimal hours must still allow inspectors flexibility to conduct an unannounced inspection.
- They must include at least 3 days with 4-hour blocks of time between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (for example: Monday or Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:00-7:00 p.m.). Other combinations of time and/or days available may also work, such as 2 full days.
- Optimal hours must also allow adequate daylight, especially in winter, to complete a full inspection.
- If an inspector tries but fails to reach you outside of your optimal times, they will not issue an attempted inspection report. If your inspector reaches you outside of your identified optimal hours, and you are present and available for inspection, you must allow your inspector to conduct the inspection.

**Optimal hours do not apply to facilities open to the public.*



Designate One or More Facility Representatives

- Your representatives must be **responsible adults** who you trust to start or complete the inspection without you. They can be coworkers, family members, neighbors, friends, or other trusted individuals **over the age of 18**.
- Make sure you provide their name(s) and contact information to your inspector.
- Facility representatives must be able to complete a full inspection **including providing required records**, so make sure they know where records are and how to access them.
- If your facility representative does not know the answers to our questions, **we can set up a time within 2 days to meet and/or speak with you** before completing the inspection report.

Communicate Often with Your Inspector

- **Tell your inspector** when your or your facility representative's contact information or availability change temporarily (due to an appointment, event, or vacation).
- The inspector can't tell you when they're planning to inspect, but they can try to adjust their plans if you reach out with your schedule.

After an Attempted Inspection Report

If you do get an attempted inspection report, contact your inspector to make sure you have provided appropriate optimal hours. You can also ask any other questions about the inspection process as it relates to your facility. If we make repeated attempts to inspect your facility without success, you may be subject to enforcement action up to and including losing your license.

More Information

If you have questions, contact us:

USDA APHIS Animal Care
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(970) 494-7478
animalcare@usda.gov

To update your contact information, facility representatives, or optimal hours, please contact your USDA inspector or our office at 970-494-7478.