



The bottom line on tail-docking

Tail-docking can be done for cleanliness and to reduce the risk of flystrike. It's important to use the right equipment and leave the right length to ensure the welfare of your sheep.

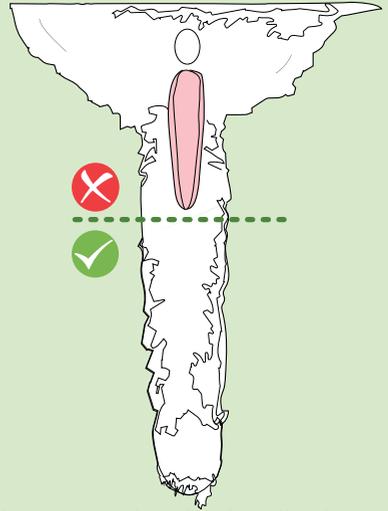


Sheep under 6 months old

You must use a hot iron or rubber ring. Otherwise you can be fined \$500.

Don't go any shorter than the distal end of the caudal fold. This is the point where the two folds of skin attach on the underside of the tail. Otherwise, you can be fined \$500 (or \$1500 for the business)

Aim to leave enough tail to cover the vulva in ewes or a similar length in rams.



Why this length?

- Tails deter insects from their rear end and help prevent dagging by allowing the sheep to flick faecal matter away.
- Tails provide a muscle anchor, which helps regulate the proper function of the rectum.
- The shorter a tail is docked, the more painful it is for the sheep.
- The risk of flystrike is increased by having a tail either too long or too short.

The regulation applies to the tail docker, the owner and every person in charge of the sheep at the time of docking.

If you use a tail-docking contractor, make sure they are aware of the rules. Have a chat about length as part of your tail-docking planning.

Sheep over 6 months old

Tail-docking must be done by a veterinarian, using pain relief. Otherwise you could face a criminal conviction and fine of up to \$3000 (or \$15,000 for the business).

For information on regulations and the codes of welfare please visit
www.mpi.govt.nz/animalregs