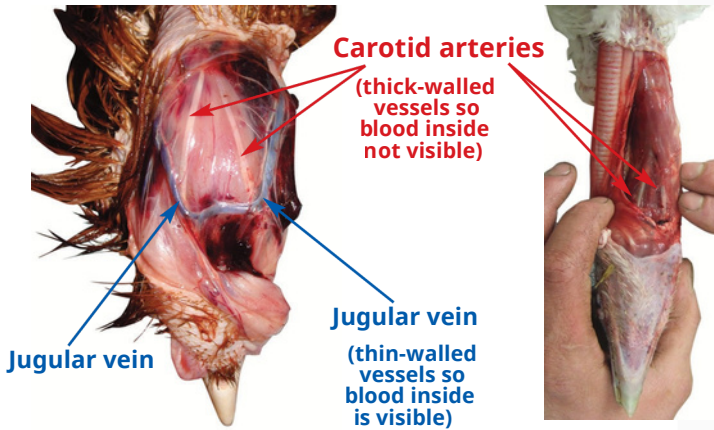


EFFECTIVE NECK-CUTTING OF POULTRY

Identification of blood vessels

Chicken

Turkey



Jugular veins are easily identified because they lie just beneath the skin.

Carotid arteries lie within the neck muscle and are the **most important** blood vessels to sever because they carry oxygenated blood to the brain.

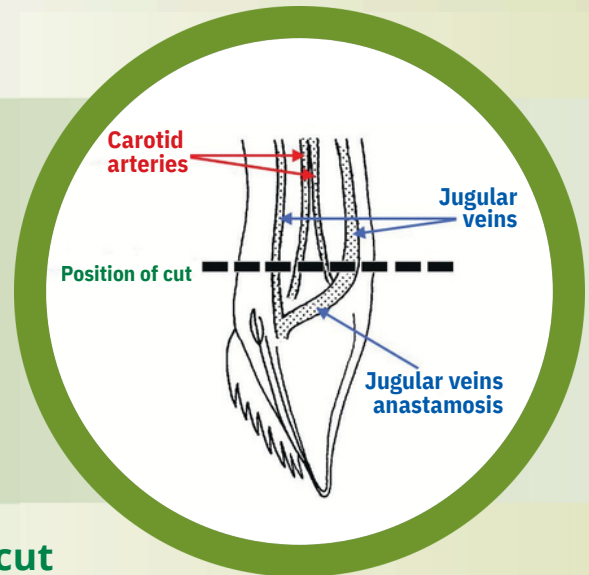
In chickens, geese and guinea fowl, the carotid arteries are typically visible on the surface of the neck muscle, near the head.

In turkeys and ducks, the arteries are hidden underneath the surface of the muscle so it is necessary to cut through the muscle to expose them for effective bleeding.

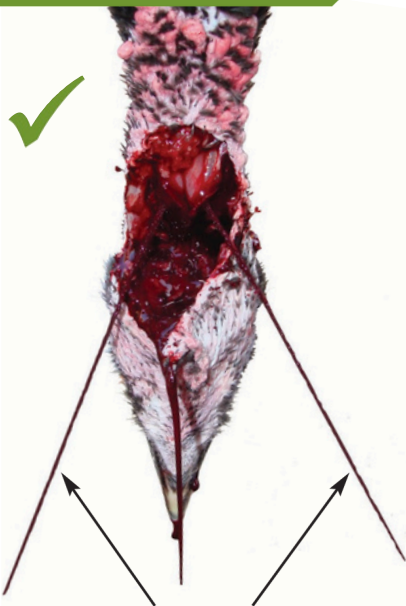
These birds have not received neck cuts but have been dissected to show the intact blood vessels

Application

A deep horizontal cut into the neck muscle, across the front and both sides of the throat, just below the jaw bone, is called a ventral neck cut (VNC). This is a reliable method of severing **both common carotid arteries** and **both external jugular veins**, in all species. A VNC bleeds birds **rapidly**, and **profusely** thereby benefiting bird welfare and meat quality.



Assessment



Upside-down V-shaped pattern of **arterial** blood flow

✓ Signs of an effective cut

Immediately after cutting, for approximately 5 –10 seconds, **two narrow 'jets' of blood** should spray under high-pressure in an upside-down V-shape; this indicates **both common carotid arteries** are severed.

Regulation states that **turkeys and geese** must be bled for not less than **2 minutes** and **all other birds** for not less than **90 seconds**.

Regularly check the bird remains unconscious during bleeding.

Confirm death (sustained absence of rhythmic breathing and corneal reflex) before commencing further processing.

✗ Signs of an ineffective cut

Slow-flowing or dripping blood immediately after cutting, even in small species (e.g. quail), may indicate the veins are cut but the arteries may remain intact. Immediately cut the neck again until sufficient blood flows, or decapitate the bird.

Note: some conditions may reduce a bird's blood pressure (e.g. slow heart rate; cardiac arrest; neck dislocation; captive-bolt stunning may cause blood vessel damage within the head) so no 'jets' of blood may be seen even though both arteries might be cut.