

Technical Note No 5

Safety and Maintenance of Electrical Stunning Equipment

Summary

All electrical stunning equipment is potentially dangerous to staff. It should only be used by properly trained, skilled individuals. Particular care should be taken of the equipment, with regular checks and maintenance carried out by a qualified electrician. All electrical stunning equipment should work by the use of an isolated circuit, in which current flows preferentially between the two electrodes. If a person comes between the electrodes there is a danger of a fatal electric shock.

It is essential that the safety procedures recommended by the equipment manufacturers are precisely followed.

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Safe operation

- Use safety switches or triggers so that the current only flows when the switch is held down by the operator.
- Do not tape switches down so that the electrodes are permanently live.
- Have a pre-set timer which regulates the duration of the current flow. With some models of equipment the voltage returns to a low level between each stunning episode. This low voltage is used for immediately sensing the resistance between the electrodes and, once detected as within pre-set limits, the stunner switches instantly to the higher stunning voltage which is applied for a pre-set duration.
- House the control box in a separate area which is always kept dry.
- Inform operators, via warning lights of the state of the equipment, eg ready, stun on, stun complete etc.

Cleaning and storage

- Electrodes should be cleaned regularly to ensure that there is minimal resistance. Clean with a wire brush, a powered wire wheel, or place the electrodes in a cleaning station, after every 20–25 animals.
- When not in use, tongs should be stored in a dry environment with the electrodes protected from damage.
- Between stunning operations and/or when filling pens, tongs should be seated on a mounted wall-bracket, or in a cleaning station.

IMPORTANT:

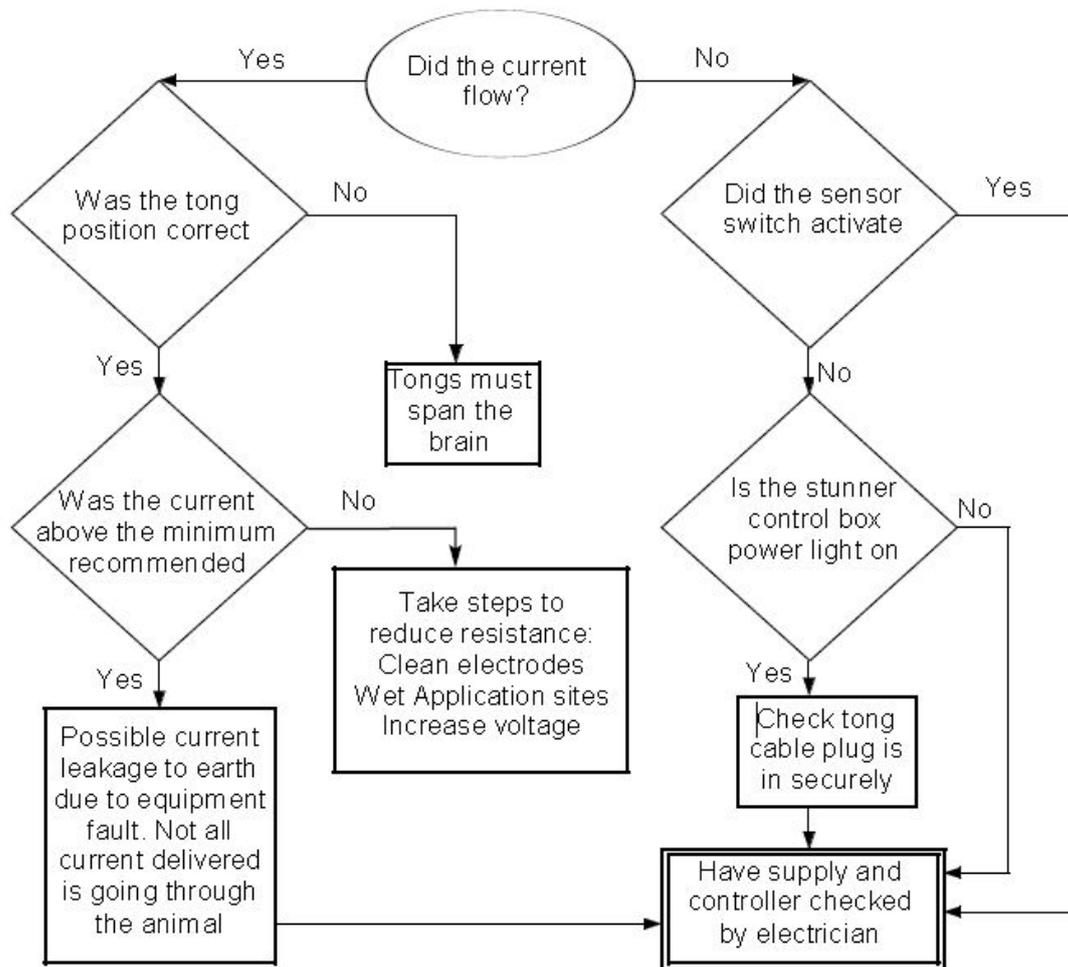
The manufacturer's instructions should be followed at all times.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

In no circumstances can the HSA accept liability for the way in which the equipment in this leaflet is used: or for any loss, damage, death or injury caused thereby, since this depends on circumstance wholly outside the HSA's control

TROUBLESHOOTING FLOW CHART

Equipment fails to stun



For enquires about practical training in the correct use and maintenance of electrical stunning equipment, please contact the HSA at the address overleaf.

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Further reading

Electrical Stunning of Red Meat Animals
Humane Slaughter Association 2005