

# Animal Hides

Revised 2024

## Storage Conditions

Temperature	30 to 36°F (-1 to 2°C)
Relative Humidity	80%-90%
Storage Period	6 months with proper curing and with good storage conditions

Hides must be adequately cured promptly after removal from the carcass and prior to putrefaction, spoilage, or hair slippage. Treatment with an effective bactericide in proper proportions can improve storability. Salt-cured, brine-cured, irradiated, or dried hides may be placed in storage. It should be noted that dried hides require lower humidity conditions. If dried hides are stored, check with the drying facility for appropriate humidity conditions.

Hides must be protected from contact with metallic salts and/or water, since metal salts can stain or otherwise damage the hides. Water damage is of particular concern. To protect hides against water damage, the top of a hide pile may be covered with plastic; however, condensation must be carefully controlled under changing temperatures.

If hides are piled in large amounts, then the weight of the stack will cause crushing damage. To avoid this, do not stack hides too high. They must be held off floors by pallets or racks. Normal tannery storage practice is to palletize hides 3-4 feet (90-120 cm) high, and then stack them two pallets high.

Adequate air circulation is necessary to avoid heat build-up and hide sweating. Hides arriving during summer months may carry considerable latent heat. If they are stacked without being properly circulated, the heat and sweat will result in damage to the entire pile of hides. If this does occur, re-salting should be done immediately. Salt used in curing and for protection must be pure in order to prevent stains and halophile contamination, commonly called “red heat.”

Rodents and insects are attracted to hides, especially dried hides, and will damage them. Beetles can cause the most severe damage; measures should be taken to prevent their infestation. Small skins are more delicate, and thus more susceptible to damage via rodents and insects. They will require extra attention.

Because of their odor, hides require special facilities that are not part of a regular cold storage operation. Only products such as green casing and pickled skins should be stored in the same room. Thus, hide storage is largely a separate enterprise. Cellar or basement rooms are often used. Adequate drainage and assurance against flooding are important. Use of an exposed brine refrigeration system may cause odor transfer.

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