

# Montana Ag Safety Program



## *Livestock Handling Safety - Swine*

- Wear appropriate PPE.
  - Steel-toed boots are recommended.
  - Dust masks or other respirator protection, as needed.
- All handling equipment should be in good working order. Broken equipment or items with sharp edges should be repaired or replaced immediately.
- Pigs should be moved in groups large enough to be efficient but small enough to be safe for both the pigs and handler(s).
  - Size of the group should be determined by the smallest point in the path of movement.
  - Handler should be able to influence lead pigs without over-pressuring the pigs in the rear.
- Sorting boards should be used (or be made readily available) when working with all large animals (sows, gilts, and boars).
- Remember, swine have a low center of gravity. Combined with their large size, they can quickly catch you off balance.
- Typically, swine will choose “flight” when presented with a threat; however, sows protecting their litter or boars may choose to “fight” and become aggressive.
- Swine have relatively poor vision and are exceptionally sensitive to changes in light, flooring, etc. Work slowly to allow time for the pigs to examine the changes.
- Swine have exceptional perceptive hearing and respond to even quiet sounds that are outside of the norm. Keep noise levels to a minimum, whenever possible, and avoid unnecessary noise/yelling to prevent startling.
- Pigs naturally circle and bunch when being handled. Circling can be used to the handler’s advantage. Bunching is a sign of incorrect handling/unnecessary pressure.
- Avoid walking against the flow of pigs.

These safety rules have been written and provided to you for your safety. Your signature below indicates you have read and understand these rules, and further, that you accept the responsibility of always using good judgment to make workplace safety your number one priority.

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