

Livestock Handling Information for Emergencies

The flight zone is an animal's personal space and it differs by species. Moving into the flight zone will cause an animal to move away from you. A general rule of thumb when moving livestock is to approach them from behind their front shoulder to move them forward. To turn an animal around, approach them directly towards or in front of their shoulder.

Be careful not to overwork an animal. If you see any signs of stress, let the animal calm down before attempting to move them again.

| Species | Tips on How to Handle |
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| Horses | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halter animals and lead from the left-hand side.• If possible, drape a towel, shirt or a piece of cloth over the horse's eyes and secure to the halter. Horses are less likely to be spooked and are easier to control when blindfolded.• If horses cannot be moved to another enclosed area, tie safely away from danger (aim for an area where they cannot sense danger).• Try not to separate horses from those they were housed with, lead them together, if possible.• If unable to lead/halter, usher horses from their side or hip to safety. Never stand or walk directly behind a horse; stay where they can see you. |
| Cattle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The easiest and most effective way of moving cattle is in a group. Isolating animals will cause stress, and they will try to move back to the herd.• If cattle are outside barn, move to a pen or field farther away from a threat.• If dairy cattle are housed in the barn and it is winter, try to move them to a sheltered area away from a threat.• Be extra careful around bulls, especially dairy bulls and recently calved or calving cows as they can be aggressive and charge. |
| Swine | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pigs are very difficult to move in a timely manner as it is not effective to rush them.• Use extra precautions around lactating sows and try to separate piglets prior to handling.• Piglets can be picked up and moved but need support under the belly.• Pigs need to be moved to a space where they are confined, or they will likely try to run back to a familiar location. |
| Poultry | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removing poultry from a barn can be very challenging due to the excitability of the birds and the husbandry practices.• It will be almost impossible to crate the birds in a timely manner of a looming threat. Evacuation is rarely practical on commercial operations. |

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| Deer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer should be handled quietly and are often calmer when handled in reduced lighting such as a covered building. • Deer should be handled in groups of 10-15 and by as few people as possible. |
| Elk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elk should be handled quietly and calmly and guided through solid walls if possible. • Smaller groups of elk will be more efficient to move, but do not isolate animals as this will cause excitement. |
| Sheep | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheep should be handled in groups whenever possible. If separated, they will run towards other sheep. • Sheep are fast. A handler moving too far into their flight zone will cause the sheep to quickly move and potentially cause the sheep to pile up on each other and become injured. • Several people are necessary to move sheep in or to new environments effectively. |
| Goats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A herd of goats will follow the lead goat. • Herding goats in small groups is more efficient, causes less stress and you will have more control over individual goat movements. |