

Milk Barn Safety

Working in a dairy barn requires long hours and attention to details. Many animal-contact injuries occur while milking and transporting cows. Dairy animals can be unpredictable and dangerous, particularly bulls.

TRUE STORY

At the beginning of a milking shift, an employee opened the gate from the corrals to the milking barn. As he hurriedly herded cows into the barn, he maneuvered between the cows in an effort to reach his milking station in the milking pit. He slapped a cow on the rump to move it forward, startling the cow. The cow kicked the milker's right knee, causing severe injury. After a lengthy stay at the hospital for a broken knee, the milker's knee remains permanently damaged.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Never approach cattle directly from the rear. Always make sure the animal knows you are approaching.
- Always leave yourself a way out if an animal reacts unpredictably.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Use only experienced milkers with first lactation and fresh cows. An animal experiencing an adverse environment during her initial milking can be difficult her entire life.
- Inspect milking barn equipment periodically to identify hazards. Train employees to identify hazards and report them to a supervisor immediately.
- Train employees to use milking equipment, manage cows and handle sanitation chemicals.
- Provide personal protective equipment such as rubber boots, aprons, and if needed, safety glasses and rubber gloves.
- Instruct employees to notify a supervisor if animals become aggressive or hard to control.

Employee:

- Inspect all equipment and the work area in the milking barn before every milking shift. Report all hazardous conditions to your supervisor.
- Follow all rules and regulations developed by your employer. Wear protective clothing and any personal safety devices issued to you by your employer.

- Report unsafe conditions and/or equipment damage to a supervisor immediately.
- Keep unauthorized personnel away from the milking barn and cattle holding areas.
- Repair equipment in the milking barn only after the power source is locked out and tagged out. Never take short cuts.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**[®]

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