

In recent years, due to the growth in size of dairy herds, the need to have effective heat detection measures, and the cost of artificial insemination (AI), the number of dairy bulls housed on farms has increased. Prior to the movement to improve herd genetics through AI, most farms had at least one bull, but it was generally housed in a very sturdy pen separate from the cows. Today, many farms house bulls with groups of cows in free stall barns or in pastures to ensure that breeding is timely to maximize milk production.

Housing bulls in free stalls or pastures with cows presents a very high risk situation for human injury. Most bulls do not show signs of aggression prior to attacking a human. Also, bulls that are in constant contact with humans perceive them as herd mates and will try to be dominant. In addition, many farm personnel today have had little or no training in safe handling procedures with respect to bulls.

## Hazard

Bull(s) housed within groups of cows or heifers on the farm. No bull handling/housing protocols in place.

## Recommendations

### Minimum Compliance:

- All employees will be trained in safe bull handling procedures and monitored to ensure compliance.
- Place “cow-bells” around the neck of the bull as a warning device.
- At least two employees will be present when working in an area where a bull is housed. Planned escape routes available.
- Cull bulls at two years of age.

### Intermediate Compliance:

- All employees will be trained in safe bull handling procedures and monitored to ensure compliance.
- Place cow bells around the necks of bulls.
- Bulls are housed in only one or two groups in free stalls. No bulls in pasture areas.
- No bulls pass through the milking parlor with the cows.
- Install safety passes (escape routes) in free stall barns.
- At least two employees will be present when working in an area where bulls are housed.

**Best Practices:**

- Bulls are housed separately in a bull pen.
- Breeding is conducted in controlled situations only.
- Most breeding is through AI. Send employees to AI school.
- All employees will be trained in safe bull handling procedures and monitored to ensure compliance.
- At least two employees will work with bull at one time.