

Safety Note #70

SAFE OPERATION OF HYDRAULIC LIVESTOCK SQUEEZE CHUTES



Photographs Courtesy of Sierra Foothill REC

Introduction

Hydraulic squeeze chutes are operated by two or more employees and routinely used as part of livestock handling operations. Safe operation of hydraulic livestock squeeze chutes can prevent most injuries and sometimes deaths, to employees and/or livestock during handling operations. Typically, injuries from hydraulic livestock squeeze chutes include contusions, cuts, abrasions, and broken bones to employees and livestock. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3203 (7) requires employees be trained on the equipment they use in the workplace.

Recommended Practices for Safe Operation of Hydraulic Livestock Squeeze Chutes

- Prior to using the hydraulic livestock squeeze chute, a communication system shall be established to safely coordinate employee actions for loading and unloading livestock into the chute with employee operation of chute hydraulics and mechanics.
- Prior to use, always inspect the livestock squeeze chute hydraulic hoses and fittings for defects or leaks and to assure they are securely attached at connection points. In addition, examine and test levers, latches, and moveable chute parts to assure they are not damaged and are functioning properly. Tighten loose bolts and nuts.
- If a hydraulic livestock squeeze chute fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the chute from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information.
- Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry in the vicinity of a hydraulic livestock squeeze chute. Tie back long hair or wear under a cap or hard hat.
- As necessary, wear boots, gloves, long pants, and eye and head protection when using a hydraulic livestock squeeze chute.
- Keep the hydraulic livestock squeeze chute work area clean and free of trip hazards.
- Avoid startling or spooking livestock during handling operations.
- Be alert and aware of potential sudden changes in conditions when handling livestock.
- Always utilize good animal husbandry practices when handling livestock.
- Keep feet, arms, hands, and fingers clear of gates and other moving hydraulic squeeze chute parts.