Safe Pig Handling

Heat Checking & Breeding
Put on your personal protective equipment (PPE).

- **Recommended PPE:**
  - Steel toe boots
  - Earplugs

- **Suggested PPE:**
  - Bump caps
  - Dust masks
  - Knee pads
  - Safety glasses
Step 2  Conduct routine preparation and maintenance.

- Dispose of all trash immediately after use to eliminate trip hazards.
- Repair or replace bent gate and stall rods.
- Clean, dry, and disinfect the breeding row between breed groups to prevent disease spread and eliminate slipping hazards.
Step 3  Choose the right boar for heat checking in pens.

- Boars should be approximately the same size or only slightly larger than gilts or sows.
  - Large boars can injure gilts under their weight.
- Boars should not be too old.
  - Older boars can be more aggressive, or unpredictable, and have long tusks.
Step 4  Hook up and lead the boar safely.

- Manual lead
  - Carry a sorting board.
  - Never wrap the rope around your wrist.
Step 4  Hook up and lead the boar safely.

- Boar bot
  - Use a well-fitted boar harness.
    - Check the boar regularly for signs of irritation under the harness.
    - Loosen harness as boar grows.
  - Tie the boar to the bottom rung to prevent tipping.
  - Stand behind the stall gate for protection while attaching the boar to the bot.
  - While standing behind the boar and boar bot, use the remote control to move the boar bot.
Step 4  **Hook up and lead the boar safely.**

- **Boar cart**
  - Use two people to load the boar.
  - Carry a sort board when loading or unloading the boar.
  - Bring the cart to the stall.
  - Block all escape routes, open the stall, and lead the boar directly into the cart.
**Step 5  Heat check.**

- Communicate your presence with gentle touch to avoid startling the females.
- Encourage all sows to rise and interact with the boar.
- Watch for pinch and trap points between the female and the stall.
- Minor Corrections Underway
  - Visually assess for signs of heat.
    - Ears standing straight
    - Swollen vulva with mucous
  - Physically assess for signs of heat.
    - Apply pressure to her back
    - Nudge her flank
    - Rub her underline
- Mark and record all females in heat.
- When working in pens
  - Always carry a sort board.
  - Work in pairs when a boar will be giving shoulder to shoulder contact in the pens.
  - Keep your knees slightly bent.
Step 6  Breed sows and gilts found in heat.

- Watch for pinch points.
- Avoid sticking your arms and hands between the body of the female and the bars of the stall.