



Factsheet

Fire Safety Tips for Farm Management

In addition to the day-to-day safety measures that should be undertaken by farm employees at all levels, there are a number of policies and practices that farm managers in particular can adopt to greatly improve fire safety at their facilities. First and foremost, management should develop a comprehensive fire safety and emergency response plan, which should include at a minimum all possible measures to:

- ! control smoking
- ! reduce the threat of arson
- ! maintain machinery, wiring, and electrical equipment
- ! ensure safe use and storage of flammable/combustible materials
- ! control "hot" work (welding, etc) and restrict usage of propane tanks, BBQs, and other flame-producing equipment
- ! ensure that aisles and walkways are kept free from stored materials and/or equipment at all times
- ! ensure that arrangements are made for experienced staff to cover shifts in times of absence
- ! clearly define response procedures for potential emergencies listing step-by-step actions to be taken in each case, including raising the alarm, usage of fire equipment, and dealing with emergency responders
- ! define inspection procedures, both for regular site patrols by security personnel and/or supervisors, and for annual inspection by local fire authorities
- ! schedule regular emergency drills for employees at all levels



Management should also ensure all farm employees are trained to ensure that:

- ! staff at all levels are fully aware of all standard practices and risk areas, and know both the procedures for reporting and correcting noncompliances as well as the penalties for ignoring them
- ! staff are familiar with the appropriate response actions for all possible emergency situations
- ! at least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action and coordinate the efforts of others in the event of fire



A multi-purpose 2A-10BC rated portable fire extinguisher approved for use in all climates should be mounted outside each exit door from buildings in smaller facilities. In larger facilities it may be necessary to place additional fire extinguishers in readily visible and accessible locations for prompt response. No farm should be without this essential piece of safety equipment, and all employees should be trained in its use.

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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Ensure that the farm name is prominently displayed at the entrance to the farm, making it easy for responders to identify the correct site.
- ✓ Post prominent notices identifying the location of the nearest telephone. Place a memo by each telephone containing clear street directions to the farm and individual building to facilitate communications with emergency responders.
- ✓ Post the emergency and evacuation procedures from your fire safety plan in highly visible locations.
- ✓ Post notices clearly identifying fire alarm and extinguisher locations.
- ✓ Conduct annual inspections to ensure no potential hazards are being overlooked. Have the local fire department check your operation to confirm that only the safest practices are in



- use.
- ✓ Conduct annual evacuation drills and regular practice fire drills.
 - ✓ Conduct annual fire training/retraining on procedures and use of fire extinguishers and other fire suppression equipment.
 - ✓ Have wiring checked periodically for fraying and indications of wear or rodent damage. Have all new or suspect electrical installations, wiring, etc, inspected and approved by licensed professionals.
 - ✓ Ensure light bulbs and heat lamps in the barn are protected with wire guards, and ensure

- heat lamps are kept away from combustible material.
- ✓ Keep grass mowed within 10 metres of buildings to 10 centimeters or less to keep fire from spreading to surrounding vegetation.
- ✓ Inspect and properly maintain hay and grain dryers and other equipment.
- ✓ Keep storage tanks of flammable liquids at least 25 metres from buildings.
- ✓ Ideally, permit only a one-day supply of feed in barns. Unless the stable and storage areas are fire-separated from each other, additional quantities of hay, straw and shavings should be stored in separate buildings or in non-combustible vented containers a safe distance away from the barns.

Did you know? Emergency personnel often define their response strategies on the way to the scene based solely on the information relayed to them by the 911 dispatcher. The dispatcher does not necessarily know every detail of your operation, and even if you've had responders tour your facilities in past, there is no guarantee that those who have seen your operation will be the ones responding to any given emergency. **YOU ARE THE EXPERT ON YOUR OWN FARM.** If the situation allows, conduct a site safety briefing with the senior fire officer upon his arrival. Inform him of hazards such as fuel, pesticides, or other flammables stored in the building or adjacent structures. Also be sure to let him know about the nearest natural or artificial water source. Is there a hydrant or outdoor hose nearby? Is there a pond behind that hill that will save them from having to truck water in? Is there an aerial map of the property available that details structures, roads, water sources and other landmarks? These details allow emergency responders to make a positive difference in protecting lives, property and the environment. Different kinds of fires require different fire-fighting tactics. The more information you are able to provide, the better equipped the responders will be to respond quickly and effectively to the emergency.

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