

Farm Fire Safety



FARM
SAFETY
ASSOCIATION

Growing Safety

Spread the Word

Office of the Fire Marshal

The following fire safety checklist was designed to assist farmers and others involved in agri-business to reduce the risk of fire occurring on their properties. It will also ensure everyone knows what to do in case of fire.

Use this checklist by placing checkmarks in appropriate boxes to ensure important steps have been taken to make your farms and homes safer from fire. Every farm and agri-business is different. Additional space has been provided for other unique issues around your property that should be added this checklist.

CONTACTING EMERGENCY SERVICES

Knowing how to contact emergency services and being able to direct them to the right place will avoid unnecessary delays in response time.

- Prominently post the fire department phone number (or 9-1-1) at each telephone.
- Prominently post clear, concise directions to your property at each telephone. This will allow you to provide clear instructions to responding emergency services.
- Make sure your neighbours know the address of your farm property and any important information about your farm and the buildings.
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It is often a neighbour who will notice smoke or flames coming from nearby barns or buildings. Making sure that neighbours have your correct address can save valuable time for the emergency responders in rural areas.

INSPECT YARD AREAS

Keeping a clean, clear space around buildings and in general yard areas can help reduce the risk of fire spreading from one building to another.

- Remove combustible materials (general storage/new or salvaged building materials) from around buildings.
- Remove brush, weeds, and tall grass from around buildings.
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PROVIDE ACCESS FOR FIREFIGHTING

Ensuring firefighters can access all areas of your property and can gain access to all buildings will avoid costly delays once they arrive.

- Provide and maintain a clear unobstructed laneway or yard area to each building. Park farm equipment and machinery in the barn or equipment shed, if possible.
- Provide gateways through fences with a clear width of at least 3.5 metres for fire department vehicles and apparatus.
- Provide clear access to water supplies that might be required for firefighting (i.e., wells, cisterns, ponds, streams etc.).
- Maintain wells and pumps used for farm water supply.
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CONTROL HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES

Following safety precautions is important when handling hazardous products. Ensure all hazardous products are clearly labelled to further eliminate guesswork in an emergency situation.

- Store hazardous products (i.e., herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, fertilizers etc.) according to manufacturer's recommendations and applicable regulations.
- Mix fertilizers and chemicals carefully in well-ventilated areas. Have materials on-hand to clean up spills immediately.
- Protect cylinders containing compressed gases from mechanical damage to the valves and the cylinders.
- Perform welding and cutting operations only in areas that are free of combustible materials. Protect adjacent areas by maintaining clearance from combustible materials or by using non-combustible shielding.
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CONTROL POTENTIAL IGNITION SOURCES

Understanding how to prevent fires from starting is essential in protecting your farm or agri-business from fire loss. Control potential ignition sources.

- Strictly enforce a 'NO SMOKING' policy in and around all farm buildings. Post 'NO SMOKING' signs in prominent places where they can be seen easily.
- Keep engines, motors and machinery well maintained to prevent malfunction and overheating.
- Refuel equipment outdoors.
- Make sure equipment is turned off and allowed to cool before refueling.
- Maintain adequate clearance to combustibles around heaters.
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INSTALL AND MAINTAIN PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

The reality of agricultural fires is the distance that firefighters must physically travel to respond. Reduce the risk of fire loss on your property by developing fire protection measures to extinguish or control a fire until firefighters can arrive.

- Install fire extinguishers in your barn, tool shed, and other farm buildings.
- Install multi-purpose fire extinguishers on tractors, combines, and other mechanical equipment and machinery.
- Make sure family members and employees know where extinguishers are located and how to use them.
- Maintain your extinguishers by inspecting them regularly and recharge when necessary. If you have water type fire extinguishers, protect them from freezing.
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MAINTAIN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES AND WIRING

Electricity can provide a dangerous supply of safety hazards that can hinder operations and ultimately start a fire.

- Use stall fans, space heaters, lights, and radios only when someone is in the barn.
- Use only listed electrical appliances and equipment.
- Disconnect or unplug electrical equipment and appliances when not in use.
- Enclose exposed wiring in barns and tool sheds in conduit to protect against exposure to weather, animals, and mechanical damage.
- Ensure electrical repairs and installations are performed by qualified electricians.
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INSTALL AND MAINTAIN LIGHTNING RODS AND GROUNDING CABLES

Lightning bolts are hotter than the temperature of the sun. If they strike a building, a large fire can ignite. Fortunately, this type of electrical energy can be effectively harnessed with a lightning protection system including lightning rods and grounding cables to prevent property damage.

- Ensure lightning rods, grounding cables and system components are approved, certified and installed in accordance with regulations.
- Check grounding cables frequently and repair if worn or damaged.
- Ensure that work is performed by properly licensed installers whenever work is required on lightning rods or grounding cables as a result of changes to the building or re-roofing.
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FIRE SAFETY PLANNING

A customized fire safety plan can work to your advantage in a fire. Develop a fire safety plan for your farm or agri-business to reduce fire loss. Fire safety planning starts with you.

- Identify exits and possible evacuation routes from all areas of barns and farm buildings. Ensure all family members and employees are familiar with these evacuation routes.
- Make necessary arrangements to house livestock in the event they need to be evacuated from the barn in a fire. If you do not have suitable areas on your property where you can contain and control your animals, you may need to consider making arrangements with neighbouring farmers.
- Maintain an identification list of all animals on your farm including pertinent details about their health (i.e., any vaccinations they have received, medication they may require) and any physical characteristics.
- Review the plan with all family members and employees and update your plan regularly to accommodate changes to the buildings, livestock or employees.
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UNIQUE ISSUES

Every farm and agri-business is different. Include unique issues that relate to your property in the space below.

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The following checklist was prepared to help further identify fire safety issues and provide positive steps that can be taken to reduce the risk and mitigate the effects of unintentional fires on farm or agri-business properties. For more information about farm fire safety, refer to the Fire Prevention on the Farm information sheet produced by the Office of the Fire Marshal.