

# Farm fire safety



**Don't let the your farm become just another  
fire statistic**



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All farms are at risk of fire. Each year in the UK approximately 1600 farm buildings, many incorporating livestock and thousands of acres of land and crops are destroyed by fire. Most fires on farms can be prevented provided farmers and others are sufficiently aware of potential fire hazards and alert enough to recognise and remedy any hazards which do occur. This booklet examines the fire dangers which are commonly found on farms and identifies simple ways in which risks can be reduced by taking sensible measures. Farm fire safety is concerned with human safety, farm animal welfare and property and environmental protection.

Fire can start in many ways and farms have all of the ingredients generally for fire to occur. Many such fires are accidental for example as the result of faulty or poor electrical wiring or equipment. In addition farms are sometimes vulnerable from other accidental causes of fire such as a lighted cigarette butt thrown from a passing vehicle which can mean the loss of whole fields of standing crops, whilst glass bottles left lying around in grass or woodlands can cause fires of huge proportions during the warm dry weather as a result of the sun's rays being concentrated and focused by the glass.

Another major cause of farm fires is arson. Forty per cent of farm fires are started deliberately, either as an act of mindless vandalism or arson. Whilst arson attacks on farms and small holdings may be difficult to eliminate, a number of simple precautions can substantially reduce the risk of attack. A serious fire on a farm can affect the financial stability of even the most well run business. Forty per cent of businesses that suffer a serious fire never trade successfully again.

For many years farmers and landowners have been diversifying and adapting buildings and land for alternative uses in ways which can boost farm incomes by adding value to farming products or by accepting enterprises which can thrive in a farm setting. Many farms now offer a diverse range of services including bed and breakfast accommodation, farm shops, visitor's centres, mazes and stabling to name a few. These activities all pose differing fire risks and should be risk assessed to ensure preventative and protective measures are suitable and sufficient.



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# The Fire Safety Order 2005

The primary Fire Safety legislation in England and Wales is the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which came into force in October 2006. It replaced all the existing fire safety legislation and impacts on all employers, owners, occupiers and self-employed businesses. There are very few exceptions from having to comply with the new regulations.

This legislation applies to farm buildings. Farm owners and managers are generally seen under the Order as being the Responsible Person with whom the duty resides to ensure adequate fire safety provisions are in place. The Order requires a Fire Safety Risk Assessment be carried out which should ensure preventative and protective measures are adopted to overcome the hazards identified and minimise the potential for fire if done properly. It firmly places the responsibility for all fire safety matters with not only the employer or manager, but also the owner of a building (who may not be the employer) and the employees.



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## Key issues

The emphasis of the Order is prevention.

The Order requires fire precautions to be put in place where necessary and as far as is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the case. Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order rests with the 'responsible person'.

In a workplace, this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises will be responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, all must take all reasonable steps to work with each other.

If you are the responsible person you must carry out a fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons'. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as the disabled and those with special needs, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance likely to be on the premises.

Your fire risk assessment will help you identify risks that can be removed or reduced and to decide the nature and extent of the general fire precautions you need to take to protect people against the fire risks that remain

If you employ five or more people you must record the significant findings of the assessment.

Over the next two pages you will find a simple Arson Reduction Checklist and a guide to carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment. The findings of these two assessments can help you significantly reduce the risk to your property from fire.



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# The five steps of fire risk assessment

One method of carrying out a fire risk assessment is to follow the simple five step approach below.

## Fire safety risk assessment

- 1 Identify fire hazards**  
Identify:
  - sources of ignition;
  - sources of fuel; and
  - sources of oxygen.
- 2 Identify people at risk**  
Identify:
  - people in and around the premises; and
  - people who are especially at risk.
- 3 Evaluate, remove or reduce, and protect from risk**
  - Evaluate the risk of a fire starting.
  - Evaluate the risk to people from a fire.
  - Remove or reduce fire hazards.
  - Remove or reduce the risks to people from a fire.
  - Protect people by providing fire precautions.
- 4 Record, plan, inform, instruct, and train**
  - Record any major findings and action you have taken.
  - Discuss and work with other responsible people.
  - Prepare an emergency plan.
  - Inform and instruct relevant people.
  - Provide training.
- 5 Review**
  - Review your fire-risk assessment regularly.
  - Make changes where necessary.

**Remember to review your fire-risk assessment regularly.**



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# Arson Reduction Checklist

Signal Crime	Yes	No
1. Is there a history of vandalism or fire setting in the area around the farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is trespass a problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Storage</b>		
1. Is hay and straw removed from the field as soon as possible after harvesting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is hay and straw stored separately from other farm buildings particularly those housing fuels, agrochemicals and machinery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is hay and straw stored in stacks of reasonable size spaced at least 10 metres apart?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is hay and straw stored separately from livestock housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Security</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Are petrol, diesel and other fuels stored in secure areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are fuel storage tank outlets padlocked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are fertilisers and pesticides kept under lock and key?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is the security of all farm buildings maintained at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is security lighting provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the farm buildings fitted with a fully operational intruder alarm with a monitored link to an alarm receiving station?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is all refuse disposed of safely and on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fire Safety Management</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Are all unoccupied areas regularly checked to ensure they are safe and secure and that there is no unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To reduce the risk of an arson attack any of the highlighted areas receiving a tick will require a control measure to be put in place. The outcomes of this arson checklist should be included in the overall fire risk assessment and action plan for the farm.



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**Below is a list of things that you should consider as part of your risk assessment**

1. Hay and straw should be removed from fields as soon as possible after harvesting, stored separate from other buildings, in stacks of reasonable size, spaced at least 10 metres apart and separate from livestock housing.
2. Petrol, diesel and other fuels should be stored in secure areas; storage tank outlets should be padlocked.
3. Fertilisers and pesticides should be kept under lock and key.
4. Refuse should be disposed of safely and on a regular basis.
5. Electrical safety checks should be carried out
6. A simple quick arson survey around the farm will identify areas where an arsonist could strike, ask the local crime prevention officer/your insurance adviser for their assistance.
7. Assess farm security measures i.e. lighting, fencing, locks.
8. Maintain firefighting equipment and check that it is in good order.
9. Prepare a fire routine and action plan, make sure all farm workers know what to do.
10. Don't allow the lighting of open fires or barbecues.
11. Ensure cigarettes etc., are extinguished carefully.
12. Only allow camping and picnicking in monitored areas.
13. Regularly check and maintain open water supplies for firefighting.



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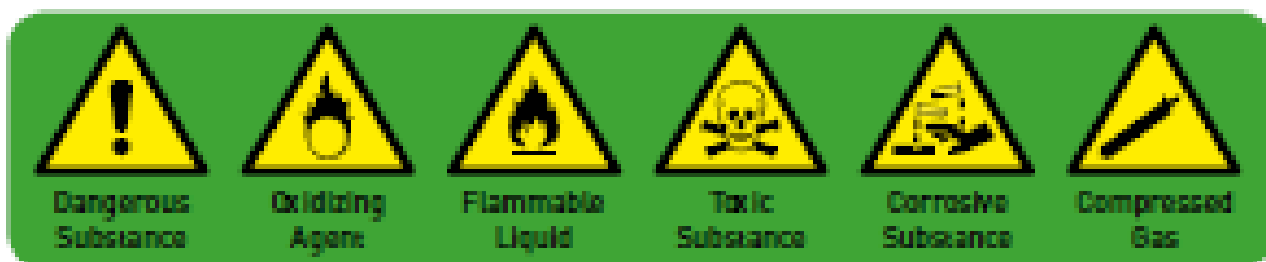


# Dangerous Substances

Under Chemical Regulations you must tell people on your farm, including workers, firefighters and other emergency services personnel, if there is a possibility that dangerous substances are involved in a fire.

They will need to know the location of the following:

- Bottled gas, especially acetylene and LPG, and bulk diesel or petrol.
- Slurry and any other animal waste.
- Guns and munitions.
- Asbestos in the materials the buildings are made of.
- You should be able to provide material safety data sheets for all chemicals used on your farm.
- Ammonium nitrate fertilisers, sodium chlorates, pesticides or any other agrochemicals and poisons.
- If more than 25 tonnes of any dangerous substances are stored you must provide the relevant hazard warning symbol



Consider installing a Fire Box at the entrance to your property, this should contain information such as:

- Location of water supplies (hydrants/open water)
- Map of the land
- Livestock on site



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- Hazardous materials storage

## Considerations where to site stack bales:

- Select a site away from any potential fire hazards and sources of ignition.
- Provide sufficient space to allow tractors and other vehicles room to manoeuvre.
- If close to a fence or boundary, assess whether the stack needs to be fenced off.
- If there is public access to the field via a footpath etc., consider providing signage to warn people to keep away.
- Do not build stacks over underground services such as gas pipes or water mains and fire hydrants.
- Do not work or build a stack under or within 10 metres of overhead power lines.

## Fire precautions

- Multiple stacks should be sighted at least 10 metres away from each other and any nearby buildings to prevent fire spread and allow safe manoeuvring between, however you may wish to consult your insurance company and local authority for advice.
- Where multiple stacks are sited together they should, if possible, be in line with the prevailing wind.
- Avoid siting stacks near public access and roads as these are vulnerable to fires from discarded cigarettes, littered glass and deliberate arson.
- Ensure combustible materials such as fertiliser, fuel and vehicles are stored well away.
- Keep bale elevator engines free of straw and other debris to avoid causing a fire.
- Do not allow smoking near stacks.
- Be aware of spontaneous combustion.
- Do not carry out any works near a stack that could cause a fire.
- Do not allow children to play on or near stacks.



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WHAT3WORDS

## If a fire breaks out

- Call the Fire and Rescue Service immediately.
- Tell the operator:
  - Where the fire is - give the full postal address including the postcode.
  - Exactly what is involved - especially any chemicals that are involved or likely to become involved in the fire.
  - If the access to the fire site will be difficult for the fire engines. Utilise what3words app for best location for fires away from the main entrance
  - If there will be problems accessing water supplies on the fire site.
- Never attempt to fight the fire unless it is safe to do so.
- If possible send someone to the farm entrance to direct the Fire and Rescue Service to the fire. Ideally they should have a torch and be wearing high visibility clothing so they are easy to see.
- Clear access routes to the fire site for the fire engines.
- Move livestock if necessary or be prepared to move them in case the fire spreads.
- Make yourself known to the Fire Crew on arrival and answer any questions they may have.



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# Controlled burning

If you are doing any kind of controlled burning such as burning rubbish, please contact Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on 01234 845000.



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