

Crime prevention advice for **Fire & Arson Advice** for Farms



Every year in the UK, farm buildings, crops, grassland and hedges are destroyed by fire. Some occur deliberately by an act of mindless vandalism, or occasionally a fraudulent insurance claim, but a large number are caused by accident or careless behaviour.

A serious fire on a farm can affect the financial stability of even the most well run business and can cause enormous damage to the environment.

Access

It is really important to ensure that the emergency services can quickly find and access your property and key areas. Ensure the property name is clearly shown at the entrance from the road from both directions.

Arson Prevention

Farms are particularly vulnerable to arson. Their isolated location, open boundaries and readily ignitable hay and straw make them an easy target. While arson attacks on farms and small holdings may be difficult to eliminate, a number of simple precautions can substantially reduce the risk of attack.

Tips to consider:

- Hay and straw should be removed from fields as soon as possible.
- Hay and straw should be stored separately from other buildings, particularly those housing fuels, agrochemicals and machinery. Proximity to housed livestock should also be considered.
- Petrol, diesel and other fuels should be stored in secure areas and storage tank outlets padlocked and alarmed.
- Fertilisers and pesticides should be kept under lock and key. The Health & Safety Executive can provide further advice on the storage and transportation of fertilisers, particularly ammonium nitrate.
- Rubbish should be disposed of safely and on a regular basis.
- Ensure you have fire extinguishers and an easily accessible water supply for key areas.
- Assess the risk, do a quick and simple survey around the farm to identify vulnerable areas and how you can improve them. If you are unsure on any areas speak to your local fire officer who will be happy to help.

Fire Prevention

Ensure there are good access routes to all areas, including fields for the emergency services and make sure all staff know where the nearest water supply is. Invite your local fire officer to visit the farm to check these and be aware of the layout of the farm and make any suggestions that could improve fire safety.



closing the gate on rural crime



Crime prevention advice for **Fire & Arson Advice** for Farms



Continued

Make sure everyone on the farm has basic training and knows the contingency plans in place in case of a fire. This includes location and use of the different fire extinguishers. Ensure your fire extinguishers are fit for purpose and are checked regularly. Have one with every vehicle in case of emergencies, especially at harvest and when on the highway.

Make sure machinery is chaff free, is serviced and in good condition.

Regularly check and maintain open water supplies that may need to be used in the case of a fire.

Put up notices and remind employees and visitors to the farm about being careful with cigarettes and matches.

Prepare to assist the fire service with farm machinery if needed.

Always stop and check hot running bearings, machines or smoke from an engine or machinery part.

If lighting a controlled fire or working in conditions such as harvest or with machinery where there is a risk of fire, be aware of windy conditions and the direction of the wind. Always have a charged mobile phone with you and ensure someone knows where you are.

During Harvest Time

Have a tractor and associated equipment ready to cut a fire break.

Keep a full water bowser or tank in or near to the field where you are working.

Clean machinery every day, especially combines and tractors to stop the build-up of chaff; if necessary use a compressor to blow debris away.

In windy or breezy conditions consider harvesting from downwind in an upwind direction, so that if a fire did start, it would not be driven through the remaining crops.

Consider cultivating fire breaks around the fields that have been harvested.

In the Case of a Fire

Call the fire service immediately with the exact location, vital minutes can make a huge difference.

If possible have people at the farm entrance and on the farm to direct the fire service as soon as they arrive, especially if the fire cannot be seen from the road or is easily accessible from the farm entrance.

Evacuate livestock to a safe area well away from the fire.

Move any farm machinery or combustible materials that are close to where the fire is, always putting your and others safety first.

Always be aware of where everyone is during the fire, it is easy for people to be lost in the smoke or cut off.

Have a pre-arranged point where everyone can go to and be accounted for.

Use the appropriate fire extinguishers for the type of fire.

