# Farm Fire Safety



Warwickshire Rural Watch

Warwickshire Police

Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service

Warwickshire County Council

## Farm Fire Safety

Farm fires can be devastating, resulting in the loss of machinery, stores of hay and straw, livestock and the destruction of buildings. Every year we attend a number of fires and emergency incidents on farms and smallholdings.



## Farms are at a particularly high risk from fire due to:

- Increased attendance times owing to isolated locations of farms and narrow access routes.
- Poor water supplies.
- Large amounts of combustible materials stored in or around buildings.

In order to grow your yield, you need to protect your field.
The simplest way to do this is to remember **FIELD!**

**F**ires in fields can be prevented. Remember to consider weather conditions, water supplies and fire breaks.

**I**ncident location – it's essential that we know how to find you. Ensure that you have clear signage from the road and be ready to guide the fire service to the correct location.

**E**xtra resources - having a slurry tank of water and chain harrow can make all the difference when fighting the fire.

**L**eave it to the fire service - don't try to tackle the fire yourself. Get out, stay out, call 999.

**D**on't take risks – ensure that you have an escape plan in place and know how to protect your livestock and machinery.



**The number of farm fires is on the increase, so don't let your farm become a statistic. You can prevent having a fire on your property by following a few simple rules:**

- Maintain machinery in good working order, especially when coming out of storage. Ensure that it is free from grease, straw and hay.
- Hay and straw should be removed from fields as soon as possible after harvesting and stored, taking care to ensure that it is dry to prevent spontaneous combustion. Store it separate from other buildings, particularly those housing fuels, agrochemicals and machinery in stacks of reasonable size, spaced at least 10 metres apart and livestock housing, making sure it's not too close to roof lighting.
- Control smoking and hot working (work associated with welding and blow lamps etc).
- Petrol, diesel and other fuels should be stored in secure areas with storage tank outlets padlocked.
- Fertilizers and pesticides should have the correct signage and be kept under lock and key.
- Electrical safety checks should be carried out.
- Assess farm security measures i.e. lighting, fencing and locks.
- Maintain firefighting equipment and check that it is in good working order.
- Refuse should be disposed of safely and on a regular basis.

- Ensure that escape routes and passages are kept free from any stored materials or equipment at all times.
- Ensure everyone knows where the nearest phone is located and how to call the Emergency Services.
- Prepare a fire routine and action plan, make sure family and farm workers know what to do.
- Ensure cigarettes are extinguished carefully.
- Only allow camping and picnicking in monitored areas.
- Regularly check and maintain open water supplies for firefighting.

## In an emergency call 999 and provide:

- The full address of the premises.
- Directions if the location is not obvious, for example when along lanes, send someone to the farm entrance to direct the fire and rescue service (appliances may have to travel from outside the local area).
- Any local landmark, such as a church or other well-known reference point.
- An Ordnance Survey 6 figure grid reference.
- Be prepared to evacuate livestock should the fire spread.
- You may be able to assist the rire and rescue service by using farm machinery to move straw/hay etc.
- Remember, fire appliances are not always able to be taken off road - keep this in mind when directing the fire service to a field fire.



## Reducing the risk of arson:

- Maintain a good standard of security for all outbuildings.
- Prevent easy access to fuel and chemical storage areas.
- Repair or replace damaged fencing or gates.
- Install intruder sensor and security lighting.



## Controlled burning:

If you are doing any controlled burning such as burning rubbish, wplease contact Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service on **01926 423231.**

## Risk Assessment:

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

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Identify fire hazards:**<br>• Sources of ignition (includes such things as welding or grinding equipment, damp hay, naked flames, munitions, smoking, poorly serviced electrics)<br>• Sources of fuel (includes such things as petrol, diesel, LPG, hay, straw etc)<br>• Dangerous substances (chemicals, fertilisers, poisons, asbestos etc)<br>• Sources of oxygen |
| 2 | **Identify people at risk:**<br>• People in and around the premises<br>• People who are especially at risk |
| 3 | **Evaluate, remove, or reduce, and protect from risk:**<br>• Evaluate the risk of a fire starting<br>• Evaluate the risk to people from a fire<br>• Remove or reduce fire hazards<br>• Remove or reduce the risks to people from a fire<br>• Protect people by providing fire precautions |
| 4 | **Record, plan, inform, instruct and train:**<br>• Record any major findings and action you have taken<br>• Discuss and work with other responsible people<br>• Prepare an emergency plan<br>• Inform and instruct relevant people<br>• Provide training |
| 5 | **Review:**<br>• Review your fire risk assessment regularly<br>• Make changes where necessary |

# Arson Reduction Checklist:

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

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.