



# Farm Fire Safety

The number of farm fires is on the increase -  
**don't let your farm become a statistic!**

Working to protect. Acting to save.

# Farm fire safety

In the 12 months from April 2016, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service attended 93 farm related fires, 51 of which were stacked or bailed crop.

## What you're required to do by law

The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 is the fire safety legislation that applies to all farm buildings where people work, including packing sheds, milking parlours, barns, holiday lets and farm houses used for providing bed and breakfast.

If you are a business owner, you are required to carry out a risk assessment. If you employ 5 or more people you are required by law to record the significant findings.

**Fire safety is your responsibility, and if you don't obey the law you could lose your business or be prosecuted**

If you need more information about fire safety, contact Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on **01707 292310** or email [administration.CFS@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:administration.CFS@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

## Fire safety risk assessments

To find out more about fire safety risk assessments and what you have to do for each of the steps on the next page, visit the following websites:

### **Animal premises and stables**

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyanimal](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyanimal)

### **Sleeping accommodation**

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyrisk4](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyrisk4)

Or you can buy copies of the guides in bookshops.

**All businesses must complete a fire risk assessment.**



**“You can help prevent fires by making fire safety a part of your business plan.”**

There are five steps to completing a fire safety risk assessment:

### Step 1 Identify any hazards, including:

- Sources of ignition - these could include things like welding or grinding equipment, damp hay, naked flames, munitions, poorly serviced electrics, smoking.
- Sources of fuel - this is anything that could burn, such as petrol, diesel, LPG, hay, straw.
- Dangerous Substances - these could be chemicals, fertilisers, poisons, asbestos and so on.

### Step 2 Identify any people at risk, including:

- Anyone near your farm buildings.
- People who work for you or who are on your premises.
- Young people.
- Firefighters and other emergency service personnel responding to a fire.

### Step 3 Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

- Evaluate the risk of fire occurring.
- Evaluate the risk to people from fire.
- Remove or reduce any fire hazards.
- Remove or reduce any risks to people - this could be by installing smoke and fire alarms, firefighting equipment, escape routes, lighting, signs or notices or carrying out maintenance on electrics and equipment.

### Step 4 Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

- Record any significant findings and the action you have taken, even if you're not required by law.
- Prepare an emergency plan.
- Inform and instruct anyone who might be affected.
- Provide training.

### Step 5 Review

- Review your risk assessment on a regular basis and make changes if you need to.

# Arson Reduction Checklist

Since April 2016, 45 of the 93 farm fires we attended were deliberate fires. As part of your fire risk assessment, you should do a survey of your farm buildings and identify any that are at particular risk from arson.

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

# 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 any:

- 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**, for more details visit <http://books.hse.gov.uk/hse/public/saleproduct.jsf?catalogueCode=9780118854351>



Dangerous Substance



Oxidizing Agent



Flammable Liquid



Toxic Substance



Corrosive Substance



Compressed Gas



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
- Hazardous materials storage

## Considerations when choosing where to 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.



## 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.
  - 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.

## Controlled burning

If you are doing any kind of controlled burning such as burning rubbish, please contact Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on 01992 507507

Spring Health Farm

“Help us find your farm quickly - make sure the entrance is clearly signed.”



# NFU MUTUAL IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE HERTFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## Helping farmers to stay safe and reduce the risk of fire

As the UK's leading rural insurer, NFU Mutual support a number of farm fire prevention initiatives and work with agricultural vehicle manufacturers to reduce vehicle fires. NFU Mutual Risk Management Services Limited also provide surveys and consultancy advice to educate farmers on potential fire hazards.

Whatever the size of your farm or the sector you operate in; NFU Mutual offer a range of farm insurance solutions at a fair price, with first class personal service. From farm to agricultural vehicle insurance you can be sure that the UK's leading rural insurer has got you covered.

What's more, with over 300 branches nationwide and a quibble-free claims service, your local agent will meet you face-to-face; get to know you, your family and your farm to understand exactly what you need.

To contact your local NFU Mutual Agent visit:  
[nfumutual.co.uk/branches](https://nfumutual.co.uk/branches)



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