



Fires are dangerous anywhere, but on the farm they pose unique perils for animals and their owners. Toxic fumes can kill or cause permanent lung damage.

Panicked animals behave unpredictably or refuse to respond to normal handling approaches. They may trap themselves and their rescuers in a rapidly spreading fire.

Work with your local fire department to minimize fire risk on your farm. Formulate an emergency fire plan and practice it regularly with family members and employees.

Likewise, conduct periodic fire safety inspections. Above all, remember that your first priority should always be human safety—and that includes you.



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Produced by  
**The Vermont Barn Fire Prevention Task Force**



a sub-committee of the  
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**Barn Fire Prevention Task Force**

**FARM FIRE SAFETY**

**Barn  
Fire Safety  
Starts With  
You**



# FARM FIRE SAFETY

NO SMOKING in or around barns, or near any flammable farm materials.

Don't store fuel, pesticides, or other flammable liquids in barns. Identify such materials clearly, and place them in a physically separated storage shed.

Ensure hay and straw is properly dried before putting it into the barn; damp compressed grasses can be a spontaneous combustion risk. Deal with detected moisture and hayloft hotspots immediately.

Field burning should not be carried out under any circumstances.

Ensure all electrical materials and appliances, circulation fans, and other equipment are in good working condition and have an approval label from a recognized certification agency authorizing them for "farm", "hazardous" or "outdoor" use.

Welding or open flame should never be permitted in barns. This includes heating, cooking and lighting appliances featuring open flames, such as propane BBQs and kerosene lamps.

Heating, cooking and lighting appliances should never be left unattended, should be in good working order with well-grounded cords, and should never be placed or operated near anything combustible.

Heat-producing light bulbs should be 60W or lower. Heat lamps should never be used in stalls, or if required for veterinary reasons, should never be left

unsupervised. Wall heaters should be turned off when not in use, and have nothing combustible left on or near them. Extension cords should only be used temporarily, and only for things such as veterinary equipment or heating blankets used for medical reasons. Remove extension cords after use.

Keep grain tightly sealed in nibble-proof containers to discourage rodent population, a common risk to electrical wiring.

Keep all wiring, permanent or temporary, out of reach of livestock.

Keep dust and cobwebs to a minimum.

Never refuel engines inside a building, or while the engine is hot or running. Keep engines and electric motors free of accumulated dust and grease.

Farm vehicles should never be left (even temporarily) in locations where they might block access to barns or ponds by emergency response vehicles.

Remove obstructions to barn walkways and exits. Relocate equipment as necessary to keep aisles and doorways clear. Keep aisles swept clean of hay and bedding.

Remove all trash to containers outside of barns daily. Inside barns, use waste containers constructed of non-combustible material with self-closing lids.

Clean up weeds, twigs or other debris that might accumulate around the outside of barns.



Photo Courtesy of Cindy Cross-Greenia

For horse barns, where animal evacuation might be possible in emergencies, leave horses haltered in their stalls overnight or keep their halters and lead shanks hanging on stall doors to be immediately accessible.

Ensure you know the location of the nearest telephone, and that you can give street directions to the farm in case of emergency.

Ensure you know fire alarm and extinguisher locations, as well as the operation of each.

If your farm has an emergency response or evacuation plan, ensure that everyone on the farm is familiar with the contents.

**All farms, large and small should periodically be evaluated for potential hazards and conditions that could lead to a fire.**

**The Vermont Barn Fire Task Force has a fire safety information and checklists that are designed to assist Vermonters to reduce the risk of fire occurring on their farm properties.**

**For additional information go to [www.vtfiresafety.org](http://www.vtfiresafety.org)**