



Farm Bureau Safety Program

FIRE SAFETY - It usually starts as just a small spark, but quickly grows into a blazing fire. Fires cause more than 4 billion dollars in property loss annually. Due to their isolation and the hazardous materials that can be found on a farm, rural residents are particularly susceptible to fire damage.

Fire safety requires prevention and preparation. Prevention keeps fire from even getting started.

During the construction of a farm structure, you can include some features that will help slow or prevent a fire. First, it is recommended to allow a minimum distance of 50 feet between buildings. Fuel storage buildings and farm shops should be located at least 100 feet apart. This distance can help prevent fire spreading to adjacent buildings. Fire walls and fire stops can be included in the design to slow or halt the movement of flames.

Some building materials have a high fire resistance rating and can slow down the flames. Wood can undergo a fire retardant treatment that slows the rate of surface spread or wood can be painted with a fire retardant paint. Some plastic insulations can have a high flame spread rate, but can be covered with a fire resistant coating.

In other fire prevention steps, try to keep areas clear of combustible materials such as rags and newspapers. Any flammable liquids

should be stored outside of the home in safety containers. Smoke detectors can alert you to a fire in time to escape. There should be a detector on every level of your house. The best location for them is outside the bedrooms, because most residential fire fatalities are caused by smoke inhalation while people are still asleep. It is very important to change the batteries in a smoke detector once a year.

In the event of a fire, you should be prepared. Have a plentiful source of water available to use in fighting the fire. Every family should have some sort of fire escape plan and an outside meeting spot. Your plan should include at least two escape routes from each room, especially the bedrooms. Purchasing a fire extinguisher is another way to be prepared for fire. Extinguishers come in various sizes and types for the appropriate locations. Be sure that the extinguisher is fully charged and that you know how to use it.

A fire in agricultural chemicals can be dangerous, due to the toxic ingredients found in fertilizers and chemicals. A fire fighter should always work upwind of chemical fire and wear complete protective clothing, including a self-contained breathing apparatus. You need to be aware of what chemicals are stored where and label these storage areas.

Make an effort to prevent fires on your farm.