

or portable heaters, make sure the wire size is sufficient for the electrical load.

- Keep all electrical wiring out of areas which can be accessed by livestock. Prevent damage to wiring insulation by using conduit to protect the wire from livestock chewing or rubbing.
- Install electric fences properly, with sufficient clearance from combustibles.

### Remember

- Look for fire hazards every day.
- When you find a fire hazard, repair it or get rid of it.
- Good housekeeping is good fire prevention. A clean, orderly work place and well-kept equipment and tools are less likely to produce fire.
- Good preventive maintenance not only prolongs equipment life, but also reduces fire hazards.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Many agricultural products used daily are highly flammable.
- Don't sacrifice your or your family's safety and livelihood by being careless with fire.

### In Case of Fire

When a fire is discovered, call the fire department at once. DO NOT attempt to fight the fire yourself. Remember, any delay in the arrival of the fire department can be disastrous.

Keep the fire department's telephone number posted prominently near the telephone. Keep directions to your farm or ranch near the phone to aid visitors or individuals who are not familiar with your area.

**Fire hazards are numerous around the farm and ranch. By practicing good fire prevention daily, YOU can keep your farm or ranch from becoming a statistic.**

### For additional information:

Nebraska Forest Service  
Rural Fire Protection Program  
PO Box 830815  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0815

Phone: 402-472-2944

Fax: 402-472-2964

Website: [www.nfs.unl.edu](http://www.nfs.unl.edu)



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## Fire Prevention on the Farm and Ranch

*What every country homeowner needs to know about fire!*

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

**Farm and ranch families have always been concerned with fire. Long distances from fire departments result in longer emergency response times. The lack of adequate water for fire fighting is another common problem. These two factors combine to make fire on the farm or ranch extremely costly and potentially dangerous.**



**America's rural residents are ¼ of the nation's population living on 98 percent of the land. Rural residents must give fire prevention first priority in protecting their homes, families and businesses.**

**Fire prevention on the farm or ranch starts with YOU.**

### **Machinery Fires**

Checking for and fixing fire hazards before starting work each day will reduce the chance of costly equipment fires. Look for:

- any build up of crop residue around the engine, exhaust system, belts and chains;
- damaged exhaust system components;
- worn or badly frayed drive belts;
- broken or exposed electrical wiring;
- the odor of burning electrical wiring;
- worn or mis-aligned moving parts, which can indicate the lack of lubricant; and
- signs of leaking fluids, oil and fuel.

### **Flammable Liquids**

Flammable liquids, such as gasoline, diesel, oils, solvents and cattle dips, are frequently used on farms and ranches. Most liquids of this type are stored in shop and maintenance areas, which also contain many sources of ignition. Extreme caution must be taken with these products.

- Flammable liquids should be stored in a designated area away from all sources of heat, such as welders, grinders, heaters, electric motors and hot engines.
- Flammable liquids should be stored in Underwriter Laboratories (UL) approved containers. Plastic milk jugs, pop bottles, glass jars and coffee cans are not approved containers.
- Use flammable liquids in well-ventilated areas. Vapors from these liquids can travel great distances to an ignition source.

### **Safe Fueling**

Too often during the busy season on a farm or ranch, safe fueling practices are ignored in an effort to save a little time. The few seconds saved are insignificant when compared to the loss of expensive farm equipment or weeks, even months, spent in a hospital due to carelessness.

- Never refuel equipment with the engine running.
- Allow hot engines to cool for 15 minutes before refueling.

- Extinguish all open flames and smoking materials before refueling.
- If fuel spills on an engine, wipe away any excess and allow the fumes to dissipate.

### **Open Burning**

History shows that as long as man has been farming, he has used fire as a tool to clear fields. Unfortunately, each year thousands of acres and millions of dollars are lost to careless burning practices.

- Check local, county or state laws on open burning. Always obtain a permit to burn from the local fire department. Be sure to notify the fire department when you start burning.
- Be aware of the weather conditions and be flexible. If weather conditions are unfavorable or forecast to be unfavorable, postpone the burning to a later date.
- Be aware of your surroundings and other combustibles. Protect buildings and fences.
- Look up. Watch out for power lines and tree branches.
- Build a fire break to contain a fire in the area to be burned.
- Keep firefighting tools, such as rakes, shovels and garden hoses, close at hand, for small fires. Discs, plows and large sprayers are needed for large fires. Have plenty of help.
- Remember, fires can grow extremely fast. A small fire can rapidly become a raging wildfire with a gust of wind. If a fire appears to be getting away, call your fire department immediately. Never leave a fire unattended.

### **Livestock and Fire**

While livestock are not normally considered a fire hazard, the environment in which they are placed can contain many fire hazards in the form of tools and equipment.

- Secure heat lamps to a solid object that will not fall into bedding materials if bumped.
- Use non-combustible bedding, such as dry sand instead of straw, when using heat lamps.
- If it is necessary to use extension cords for heat lamps