

Crime prevention advice for **rural arson**



Every year in the UK, 1,700 farm buildings and 66,000 acres of grassland are destroyed by fire. Half are started deliberately, either as an act of mindless vandalism or a fraudulent insurance claim.

A serious fire on a farm can affect the financial stability of even the most well run business and cause enormous damage to the environment.

40% of businesses that suffer arson attacks never trade successfully again.

Farms are particularly vulnerable to arson. Their isolated location, open boundaries and readily ignitable hay and straw make them an easy target. While arson attacks on farms and smallholdings may be difficult to eliminate, a number of simple precautions can substantially reduce the risk of attack. General advice on reducing the risk of falling victim to theft and vandalism follows the arson reduction advice.

Tips to consider:

- Hay and straw should be removed from fields as soon as possible after harvesting
- Hay and straw should be stored:
 - separately from other buildings, particularly those housing fuels, agrochemicals and machinery
 - in stacks of reasonable size, spaced at least 10 metres apart
 - separately from livestock housing
- Petrol, diesel and other fuels should be stored in secure areas and storage tank outlets should be padlocked.
- Fertilisers and pesticides should be kept under lock and key. The Health & Safety Executive can provide further advice on the storage and transportation of fertilisers, particularly ammonium nitrate.
- Rubbish should be disposed of safely and on a regular basis

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue state that it is very important to ensure that the property name whether a farm, house or business is clearly shown at the entrance so emergency services can locate your property as quickly as possible.

Assessing the risk

A quick and simple survey will identify areas where an arsonist could strike. If there are certain areas you are unsure about, ask your local crime prevention officer or insurance advisor for assistance.