

# Farm Fire and Emergency Sketch

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Farm fires, especially those involving livestock, are a devastating and stressful event for farm families. The property damage, loss of poultry or livestock, interruption of production and injuries cost the Ontario agricultural industry millions of dollars a year.

## What is a Farm Fire and Emergency Sketch?

A farm fire and emergency sketch is an aerial photo of your farm that identifies significant farm features, fire risk areas, water sources and access routes for emergency vehicles. Developing this sketch is an important first step in preparing for emergencies, as information given during an emergency, when stress levels are high, can be sporadic and incomplete, or the person who has the information may not be available.

The sketch can also be used for:

- training your family and employees for emergency situations
- developing a preventative maintenance and housekeeping schedule to reduce the risks of fire
- ensuring the safety of first responders during an emergency

We recommend that you store your sketch at your operation to have on-hand in the event of an emergency. It's also a good idea to share it with local fire prevention officers or use it as a basis for a fire prevention inspection (a service offered by some municipalities). Giving first responders the sketch ahead of time will help them to know potential risks on your farm, and provides an opportunity to improve their response to an emergency.

## Creating a Farm Fire and Emergency Sketch

### Step 1 Aerial Photo

Get an aerial image of your farm and property. You can find an aerial image of your farm using the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) Agricultural Information Atlas (AIA) at [ontario.ca/agmaps](http://ontario.ca/agmaps). However, an aerial image from any source will work.

### Step 2 Farm Fire and Emergency Checklist

With the help of first responders, we compiled a checklist to help you identify the important items to include in your sketch (attached). Items included in the checklist are based on first responder knowledge of how farm fires start, how fires could have been prevented and the site specific details that affect the response to a fire or emergency.

Using the checklist as a guide, identify all of your farm's features on the aerial image using labels. You can label the features by hand, with icons, stickers or shapes, or whatever helps you to create a comprehensive and legible sketch. We have attached a page of icons that you can use for your sketch. If the sketch becomes too cluttered, use more specific aerial images to break down your sketch into the various sections of your property.

In addition to the checklist, here are some other items to consider for your sketch:

- where you think the highest risks are
- areas of the farm where combustible materials are stored close to sources of ignition
- where livestock can be corralled if it is possible to turn livestock loose in the event of a fire

### Step 3 Legend

Create a legend that describes what each label or icon on your sketch means, and always keep the legend with the sketch. Include emergency contact information in the legend or on the map.

#### Final Product

Figure 1 (page 3) is an example of a completed farm fire and emergency sketch with a legend. The sketch shows that the farm keeps 45 dairy heifers and 250 feeder hogs in separate barns. It identifies the laneway access to the property, location of the equipment shed and any fuel or chemical storages. A safe meeting place where all people are to gather in an emergency is marked.

The items in the checklist and on the sketch will vary from farm to farm and may change over time, so we recommend that you regularly review your sketch and update it if necessary.

#### Next Steps

There is more you can do to create a safer farm for you, your family, your employees and your livestock.

**Training** – Train your family and employees in how to respond during an emergency. Review the sketch with family members and employees to identify safe meeting spots, evaluate laneway accessibility and discuss livestock management in the event of a fire.

**Maintenance** – Use the sketch in combination with the checklist to identify any areas on your farm that could be updated for safety. Reviewing these areas on a regular basis will not only reduce the risk of fire, but also increase the safety of everyone on the farm during an emergency, including first responders. This might include:

- trimming branches and tree limbs
- clearing laneways and paths during winter
- storing flammable materials properly and away from ignition sources

**Emergency planning** – Contact your municipal office and fire department to see if they offer fire prevention services. Many insurance companies, as well as the Electrical Safety Authority, offer inspection services for the purpose of reducing the risk of a fire. Review your farm fire and emergency sketch with them as they may have additional advice on how to reduce the risk of fire or other emergencies. They may also review their response protocols in the event that a fire does occur.

**Industry awareness** – Talk to different groups or farm organizations about how to manage livestock during a crisis. They may have information available about livestock behaviour during farm fires. Understanding how livestock behave under stress can make a huge difference in managing expectations or rescuing them during fires.

#### Additional Information

Perth East Farm Fire Safety Program  
[www.pertheast.ca/en/municipalservices/resources/farmfiresafetyGUIDE.pdf](http://www.pertheast.ca/en/municipalservices/resources/farmfiresafetyGUIDE.pdf)

OMAFRA Publication 837, "Reducing the Risk of Fire on Your Farm"  
[www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/barnfire/toc.pdf](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/barnfire/toc.pdf)

Farm & Food Care emergency resources  
[www.livestockwelfare.com/emergency-response/](http://www.livestockwelfare.com/emergency-response/)

**Owner Contact Information**  
 Primary Contact Name:  
 Primary Contact Phone:  
 Secondary Contact Name:  
 Secondary Contact Phone:  
 Laneway Access:   
 Safe Meeting Place: 

**Emergency Contacts**  
 Spills Action Centre: 1-800-268-6060  
 Fuel Suppliers:  
 Veterinarian:  
 Electrician:  
 Plumber:  
 Excavator/Backhoe:

**Structures**  
 Residence:   
 Barn 1: 45   
 Barn 2: 250   
 Equipment Shed:   
 Anaerobic Digester: none  
 Manure Storage: none  
 Doors:   
 Other:

**Hazards**  
 Fuel Storage(s):   
 Chemical Storage(s):   
 Power Lines:   
 Solar Panels: none  
 Generator/Electrical Shut-off: 

**Water Supply**  
 Well(s):   
 Secondary water source: none



**Figure 1.** Example of a completed farm fire and emergency sketch with legend.

**For more information :**  
 Agricultural Information Contact Centre  
 1-877-424-1300  
 Email: [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca)

**[ontario.ca/farmsafety](http://ontario.ca/farmsafety)**

# Farm Fire and Emergency Checklist

Farm name \_\_\_\_\_  Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date sketch created:

## Emergency Contacts

- Spills Action Centre 1-800-268-6060
- Hydro
- Union Gas or propane supplier
- Livestock vet
- Hospital

## Roads and Laneway Access

- Roads to farm, including nearest crossroads
- Safety meeting point
- Traffic control (someone to direct fire trucks, block roads from public traffic, etc.)
- Any potential access barriers
  - Inaccessible sides of buildings
  - Seasonal access points
  - Overhanging trees
  - Soft laneways not suitable for larger vehicles
  - Other

## All Utility Shutoffs

- Hydro (per building and farm)
- Natural gas
- Propane
- Heating oil
- Backup generators
- Anaerobic digester generator
- Solar panel disconnect

## Alternative Energy Sources

- Solar panels – ground mounted
- Solar panels – roof mounted
- Battery bank location
- Anaerobic digester

## Onsite Water Sources

- Surface water – ponds, rivers, creeks
- Cisterns

## Environmental Notes

- Wells
- Tile inlets and catchbasins
- Surface water (in case of spills)

## Buildings

- House or other residential area
- Permitted smoking areas
- Livestock housing
- Equipment storage
- Workshop
- Fruit/vegetable storage
- Grain storage

## Livestock Housing

- Indicate all livestock housing buildings and type of livestock in each building
  - Swine  Sheep
  - Dairy  Goats
  - Beef  Horses
  - Poultry  Mixed
  - Other
- Attic access points
- Bale or feed chute
- Accessible doorways and gates for livestock
- Combustibles (hay, straw)
- Manure storage
  - Underground  Above ground
- Slatted Flooring materials
  - Concrete  Plastic slats
- Manure clean out (holes in floor or walls)
- Pass through holes (poultry)

## Chemical Storages

- Fertilizer
- Pesticide, herbicide, etc.

## Fuel Storages

- Propane tank
- Gas
- Diesel
- Oil

## Existing Fire Prevention

- Sprinklers
- Internal fire walls or doors
- Fire retardant curtains
- Other: (list – e.g. dry hydrant)