



## Fire Safety at Agritourism Facilities

Rustic settings have become popular venues for wedding events and other meetings or gatherings. Many agricultural properties are converting old barns into event centers – or building new barns for this purpose. Even though these settings create beautiful backdrops for such events, the importance of proper fire safety in such buildings cannot be overstated.

To ensure the safety of those who will be attending events at agritourism facilities, basic fire safety precautions must be taken when these facilities are converted or constructed.

Although agricultural facilities may be exempt from the Ohio Building Code in certain circumstances, such facilities are not exempt from the Ohio Fire Code.

It is the mission of the State Fire Marshal to ensure public accommodations are as safe as possible for all members of the public who frequent them, as well as for workers at such establishments and for the owners of these beautiful and vibrant facilities.

### Fire Hazards Often Present at Agritourism Facilities



Highly flammable/combustible materials, such as exposed timbers, hay and straw

Storage of chemicals and flammable liquids



Minimal exits

Candles



Flammable drapery and fabrics

Pyrotechnics / fireworks / flame effects

Unapproved cooking devices

### Other Considerations

Insurance companies may not insure facilities that are not fire code compliant.



## Minimum Safety Requirements to Consider

Required fire safety features will depend on the exact building specifications and building layout. However, the following should be considered when event buildings (which generally fall into an A-2 occupancy classification) are being designed and/or converted:

- A fire alarm system is required in A-2 occupancies that have an occupant load of 300 or more.
- A fire suppression system is required in any A-2 occupancy more than 5,000 sq. ft. or that has an occupant load of 100 or more.
- Any required fire suppression system will have to cover the entire floor where the A-2 occupancy is located.
- A-2 occupancies may require fire rated separation from other occupancies in the same structure.
- If occupant loads in the facility will exceed 50 people, exit doors must swing outward or in the direction of egress travel.
- Portable fire extinguishers must be present.
- Exits, including proper signage and lighting, must be provided and must be sufficient for the specific facility.
- Fire apparatus access roads must be provided and maintained.
- If commercial cooking equipment is used, or if grease laden vapors are going to be produced, the cooking equipment may require a hood suppression system.
- If a carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) system is used (with more than 100 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>), a detection system must be provided in areas where CO<sub>2</sub> can accumulate.