

HAY BALER

FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

1. Routine Equipment Maintenance and Inspections:

- Address small issues before they lead to big problems that could easily lead to expensive and un-wanted downtime.
- Save time & money - When equipment fails interrupting the workflow, you might not be able to stick to your schedule and meet deadlines. Identifying potential problems early, will help allow time to order parts or schedule a service call for a mechanic.
- Because hay baler fires are usually the result of sparks or heat, keep the belts at proper tension and bearings, chains & other moving parts greased and lubricated.
- Hydraulic leaks from hoses or cylinders will also contribute fuel to a fire, so ensure those are also quickly addressed.
- Not only is maintenance beforehand important, but also stop periodically during baling to do a quick visual inspection. Some common indication of issues may be extra twine or netting wrapped around roller or discolored bearing housings. Since bearing failure is a common cause of baler fires, some operators have started using a laser thermometer as a tool to monitor bearings for excessive heat. These thermometers can be easily bought for about \$20.

2. Keep it Clean:

- A hay baler is really just a big container of fuel for a fire - hay, dust and hydraulic fluid. So eliminate any extra by keeping it cleaning it up thoroughly after each use; use an air hose to blow out all the fine pieces & dust.
- Open doors, shields & guards to clean inside those of debris too. But be sure they are back in place, as they not only protect the operator from hazards but also help prevent accumulation of hay & dust in friction areas.

3. Look and Listen:

- Pay attention! If something looks, sounds or feels different stop and investigate. Bearings and other mechanical parts will usually give an indication of a problem before they turn into emergency problems, so don't ignore these signs.

4. Be Prepared: With a hay baler, it may take some time before a smoldering ember is evident. So you must be prepared to act quickly when you see that first indication of smoke. While calling 911 is good and the fire department can help contain the fire from spreading across the field, the reality is they will never arrive in time to save your hay baler. Be prepared to be your own first responder.

- Drop the hay bale.
- Have an ABC fire extinguisher easily accessible (in the tractor cab is quicker & safer access than on the baler itself) and know how to use it.
- A water fire extinguisher is a great addition. They will spray harder streams that can penetrate hay easier & reach hot, smoldering areas quicker.
- Never open doors or guards while parts are still moving. Shut it off & wait for everything to stop completely. If the fire can be reached & extinguished without opening the baler up that's even better because the more air that gets to the area the quick the fire will spread.
- If the fire is growing quicker than you are putting it out, unhooked tractor and move it away. But never put yourself in danger trying to do this, your life is worth more than the equipment.