

Prevent Grain Dryer Fires

Protect Harvests and Property

Grain dryer fires can be devastating, especially when they occur during key harvest periods. They destroy crops that cannot be replaced and impair drying operations. Fires also endanger people who are working nearby, as well as other storage bins, buildings, and equipment. Reduce your fire risk by following good maintenance and cleaning practices.



Key Practices

- ✓ OSHA 1910.272(p) Continuous Flow Bulk Grain Dryers requires direct heat grain dryers to have automatic controls that shut off the fuel supply if power is lost, if the flame fails, or air movement through the exhaust fan is lost.
- ✓ Controls must also stop grain from being fed into the dryer if excessive temperature develops in the drying section exhaust.
- ✓ Preventative maintenance is critical. Follow manufacturer cleaning schedules at all times. Maintenance can include controls, bearings, belts, and burners.
- ✓ Prior to startup inspect the dryer, check controls for proper function, and test any shut down or monitoring systems. Remember to remove the dryer tarp.
- ✓ After any shut down, maintain a 30 minute fire watch with a fire extinguisher in case smoldering material catches fire later.
- ✓ When the drying season is done, empty the dryer, thoroughly clean all areas, and shut off fuel supplies.
- ✓ Cover the burner with a tarp when not in use, but remember to remove before use.
- ✓ Train all employees regarding equipment controls and emergency response procedures.
- ✓ Implement emergency response procedures regarding steps to shut down equipment, use extinguishers, and respond to fire.

Key Facts

- ✓ Grain dryers operate at temperatures above 1400F, which creates a fire risk as the drying grain and dust adds potential fuel.
- ✓ A high number of dryer fires occur when grain plugs in the dryers, begins to smolder, and catches fire.
- ✓ Grain can plug or accumulate in grain columns and overheat. Keep grain columns clean and clear at all times.
- ✓ Ignition sources include friction and heat caused by poor bearings, slipping belts, or gears that have not been maintained.
- ✓ Most dryers are located in remote areas where fire department response will be delayed. Therefore, preventative controls and early intervention are critical.

Check out our [Safety Tips page](#) for more safety information.

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