



BeGrainSafe: Preventing Combine Fires



A Harvest Safety Checklist for Farmers

A combine fire can turn a productive harvest day into a dangerous and costly situation within minutes. Dry crop residue, heat, friction, and fuel create the right conditions for fires to start, but many combine fires can be prevented through proactive maintenance, regular cleaning, and safe operating practices.



Use this checklist before and during harvest to help reduce the risk of equipment fires and protect people, machinery, and crops.

Building fire prevention into daily harvest routines helps protect people, equipment, and crops. A few minutes spent on maintenance, cleaning, and inspection can make a significant difference when harvest conditions are dry, hot, and demanding.



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BEFORE HARVEST: PREPARE EQUIPMENT

- ☐ Clean the combine thoroughly before the season begins. Remove oil, grease, dust, and old crop residue so potential problems are easier to identify and address.
- ☐ Inspect the combine carefully before heading to the field. Check belts, bearings, hoses, fuel lines, electrical wiring, and other components for damage, wear, or signs that repairs are needed.
- ☐ Repair problems before harvest begins. Replace worn parts, fix leaks, and complete necessary maintenance before the busy season starts.
- ☐ Have fire extinguishers inspected annually by a certified technician. Make sure extinguishers are working properly before they are needed.
- ☐ Equip combines with accessible fire extinguishers. Best practice is to have one extinguisher inside the cab and another mounted outside where it can be reached from the ground.
- ☐ Review emergency plans with everyone working during harvest. Make sure all workers know what to do, who to contact, and where emergency equipment is located.

DURING HARVEST: INSPECT BEFORE OPERATING

- ☐ Complete a pre-operational inspection every day before starting work. Look for anything that could create a fire risk before entering the field.
- ☐ Check for crop residue, dust, and debris buildup. Pay close attention to areas around the engine, exhaust system, belts, chains, and other hot components.
- ☐ Look for leaks or damaged parts. Check for leaking fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, worn components, and damaged hoses or wiring.
- ☐ Check fluid levels and lubrication. Ensure moving parts are properly lubricated and that excess grease or oil is not accumulating near heat sources.
- ☐ Inspect electrical components. Look for damaged wiring, loose connections, or anything that could create sparks.
- ☐ Pay attention to unusual smells, sounds, or heat. These can be early warning signs that something needs attention.

KEEP EQUIPMENT CLEAN THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- ☐ Remove crop residue regularly. Use a portable leaf blower or air compressor to clean dust, chaff, and debris from the machine.
- ☐ Clean combines at least a couple of times during the workday. Harvest conditions can quickly create buildup around hot components.
- ☐ Do not let a busy schedule override safety. A few minutes spent cleaning and inspecting equipment can prevent significant damage and downtime.

REFUEL SAFELY

- ☐ Turn off the engine and allow equipment to cool before refuelling.
- ☐ Never refuel while the engine is running.
- ☐ Clean up fuel spills immediately.
- ☐ Avoid entering or climbing into equipment while refuelling. Static electricity can ignite fuel vapours.

IF A COMBINE FIRE STARTS

- Shut off the engine immediately if it is safe to do so.
- Exit the combine and move to a safe location.
- Call for help as soon as safely away from the machine. Carry a cellphone or two-way radio during harvest so emergency communication is possible.
- Use a fire extinguisher only if the fire is small and it is safe to do so.
- Do not risk a life trying to save equipment. If a fire is spreading or difficult to access, move away and wait for help.



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