

back to basics #11

Fire Safety

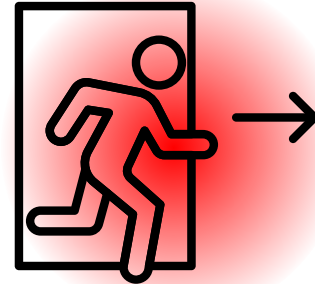
If you're looking to open a yard, or are restructuring your existing yard, these are the key considerations to make to get you on the right track



Knowing Legal Responsibilities

Defining employment status for grooms

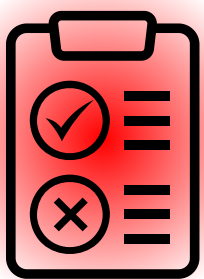
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is the main piece of fire safety legislation that applies to premises where animals are kept and people have access, including livery yards, equestrian centres and private yards with employees. Business owners are responsible for carrying out a fire risk assessment to identify and reduce potential hazards. Fire safety of the premises is your responsibility. Failing to meet legal requirements can put people and horses at risk and may result in enforcement action, prosecution, or the loss of your business.



Have an Evacuation Plan

Getting everyone to safety

A clear evacuation plan ensures everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Identify escape routes, safe assembly areas and the steps needed to safely evacuate both people and horses, with everyone on the yard aware of their role. Keep headcollars and lead ropes easily accessible, and have plans for a designated and secure evacuation area for the horses, considering individual needs. Stay calm and act quickly – horses can sense panic, so calm handling is essential. Only move horses if it is safe to do so, and never put people at risk attempting to save animals. Never turn horses loose at risk of others..



Having Rules in Place

Everyone must understand fire safety

Simple everyday rules can significantly reduce the risk of fire. Establish clear yard policies, including no smoking, no naked flames, safe storage of flammable materials, and ensuring all electrical equipment is regularly checked and maintained (including PAT testing where appropriate). Everyone using the yard should understand and follow these rules. They should be included as part of your livery contract, or provided in a separate Yard Handbook.



Firefighting Equipment

An essential for the yard

Keep suitable firefighting equipment on the yard, including extinguishers, hoses, and buckets, and ensure they are regularly checked and maintained. Make sure hoses reach all key areas of the yard to help slow the spread of fire. Only use firefighting equipment if it is safe to do so.



Assess Your Risks

A 5-step Risk Assessment process

- Identify hazards
- Identify people / animal / property at risk
- Reduce risks where possible
- Record findings, have clear emergency procedures and ensure everyone who needs to know understands them.
- Review regularly

Keep a written record of your fire risk assessment, including identified hazards, actions taken and any improvements needed. Store this information securely and ensure it is available for review and updates as your yard changes.



Act Fast in case of Fire

Quick reactions saves lives

- Call the Fire and Rescue Service immediately.
- Provide exact location, details of what is involved (including animals or chemicals), and any access or water supply issues.
- Consider using ///What3Words location app to identify key areas of the yard
- Keep access clear, direct firefighters to the scene, and follow your evacuation procedures if needed.



Further Support

Support for your business

If you need more information about fire safety, contact your local Fire and Rescue Service, or a dedicated equestrian H&S Consultant