

OK FIRE MARSHAL OKS RULES FOR STALL DECORATIONS

At the height of the 2006 show season Inspector William McCaine of the Oklahoma City Fire Marshal's Office brought to my attention the problem of stall decorations. He said, in part, "We do many horse shows here at our state fair arena. The problem that I am having is that in the barn areas the stalls have pretty much become show places with some of them decorated with elaborate frontages and decorations, most of which are toxic [in a fire] and highly combustible, not to mention in violation of fire codes. . . The barns were not designed for that purpose or fire load. I believe the lack of any current catastrophe has given everyone a false sense of invincibility and they do not realize the fire and life safety risks involved with this continued practice. . ."

Inspector McCaine and the Oklahoma City Fire Marshal's Office shortly thereafter produced the following rules. I urge you to promote these regulations in your own state, province, or country. This is an easy to follow set of regulations that has the potential to save many lives.

OKLAHOMA CITY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE **SPECIAL EVENTS SUPPLEMENTAL FOR LIVESTOCK FACILITIES**

"The majority of components in a horse barn are highly flammable. Horses are usually standing in ample amounts of dried bedding, eating dried forages. In the case of barn fires, the old adage '**an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure**' could not be more true"

Source: Penn State, College of Agricultural Sciences, Jennifer Smith Zajackowski, Senior Research Technologist, Eileen Wheeler, Assistant Professor

There are few structures more inherently flammable than a barn or livestock facility. Between the type of construction, the hay, straw or wood shavings used for bedding, the blankets, leg wraps, and saddle pads, the inevitable cobwebs, and the dust and particles in the air, some barns can be a three-alarm fire waiting to erupt if **proper safety guidelines are ignored**. And as patrons who utilize the barns for the showing of livestock you must realize that fire prevention is more than hanging a "no smoking" sign on the door. It requires a comprehensive approach – from identifying the hazards to taking every possible precaution.

This supplemental is to address the necessity for improved fire safety practices regarding livestock facilities at the Oklahoma City State Fair Grounds. We in the Fire Marshal's Office understand that due to past practices this transition will have to be a gradual one. It will require cooperation and patience from all parties involved, remembering that the singular most important goal for all involved should be **LIFE SAFETY**.

Effective **immediately** the following procedures shall be followed and will be strictly enforced by the Oklahoma City Fire Marshal's Office:

- Plastic or vinyl material shall not be used to cover tops of livestock stalls. These products are highly flammable and very toxic and create a risk to people and animals alike. In order to help with the transition, cotton sheets or brown butcher paper (non-waxed type) will be acceptable stall covering(s) at this time. **NFPA 701 certified** flame

retardant material can also be utilized if available. This type of material **shall** be utilized in panels no wider than 4 feet with 4” gaps in between to provide avenues for sprinkler suppression.

- No two (2) continuous stalls shall be covered at any time.
- Combustible storefront elevations shall be treated in **ACCORDANCE WITH NFPA 701** to make them flame retardant and a certificate or similar proof is supplied to the Oklahoma City Fire Marshal’s Office prior to its placing. Certificates may be obtained from the manufacturer or supplier. **Material that is being treated by user must be done in the presence of an Inspector from the City of Oklahoma City’s Fire Marshal’s Office.**
- Awnings shall not extend out from stalls any further than 3 feet and 11 inches.
- **No portable heaters of any type are allowed** in the Oklahoma City Fairground livestock facilities.
- No smoking will be permitted in Arena or Livestock area (**BARN**S). A separate smoking area should be established.
- No tents or canopies over 225 square feet inside arena or barn without prior approval from the Oklahoma City Fire Marshal’s Office.
- No hay, straw, shavings, or similar combustible materials used for decorations are permitted within any facility unless they have been treated in **ACCORDANCE WITH NRPA 701** to make them flame retardant and a certificate or similar proof is supplied to the Oklahoma City’s Fire Marshal’s Office prior to its placing. Certificates may be obtained from the manufacturer or supplier. **Material that is being treated by user must be done in the presence of an Inspector from the City of Oklahoma City’s Fire Marshal’s office.**
- Combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day during the period the arena/exhibit is occupied.

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