



**EVERGREEN**  
INSURANCE

Don't Just Insure it...



## Operating Grain Dryers

Grain dryers are an essential piece of equipment on many farms—one that ensures any grains you have harvested are ready for distribution and do not spoil. In fact, high levels of moisture in your corn, soybeans or other crops can significantly impact its life expectancy and overall value.

And while grain dryers can help you generate healthy and profitable yields, they carry a substantial level of risk, particularly as it relates to fires. Data suggests that the number of grain dryer fires have been increasing annually and are often caused by:

- A lack of operator training
- Minimal oversight or monitoring during grain dryer operation
- Poor cleaning and maintenance practices
- Running grain dryers at excessively high temperatures
- Restarting hot or warm grain dryers without a complete inspection

These fires not only have the potential to destroy grain and equipment, but they can also lead to considerable downtime, workplace safety issues and lost revenue. Thankfully, there are precautions you can take to reduce the risk of grain dryer fires and other safety concerns.

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### Workplace Controls

While there are different types of grain dryers (e.g., natural gas fueled and liquid petroleum gas fueled), they all carry some level of risk. Just one mishap can damage expensive equipment, destroy nearby buildings or even injure employees. To protect your farm and staff, consider the following grain dryer workplace controls:

- **Location and installation practices**—Grain dryer safety begins with the installation process. To help minimize the risk of fire, grain dryers should be placed away from buildings, structures, foliage and other potential fire hazards. It's also important to ensure that, if a fire does break out, emergency personnel have easy access to your grain dryer. In general, grain dryers should not be placed inside grain handling or storage structures. It's also a good idea to place grain dryers on a level, noncombustible surface.
- **Fire prevention**—When using grain dryers, fire hazards are a considerable concern. Something as simple as improper training or a faulty fuel line can lead to disaster. To prevent fires on your farm, consider the following:
  - Have a fire detection system in place.
  - Ensure all electric wiring, burner systems and other key components are installed by a professional and meet the manufacturer's recommendations and any applicable codes.
  - Ensure fuel supply systems and lines are installed by a trained professional. Inspect these connections regularly to ensure they are in good condition.
  - Turn grain dryers off immediately if you smell gas or hear excessive vibration and unusual noises coming from the

machine.

- Ensure your grain dryer is equipped with an automatic shutdown system. These systems allow you to easily cut off fuel or heat sources, stop the flow of grain and sound an alarm.
  - Sift your grain before putting it in the dryer. Specifically, you'll want to remove any excess materials that could start a fire.
  - Never operate your dryer above the recommended plenum temperatures.
  - Shut down the grain dryer during refilling.
  - Avoid disconnecting or tampering with heat sensors, gas valves or other safety controls.
  - Ensure your grain gas is calibrated properly and that all safety devices/components are operational and certified by professional technicians.
  - Clean your grain dryer regularly to prevent the accumulation of combustible materials.
  - Equip your grain dryer with an emergency dumping mechanism. This will allow you to unload burning grain to a safe location where you can more easily contain the fire.
- **Maintenance tips**—Thorough maintenance and inspection controls can go a long way toward avoiding grain dryer issues and subsequent fire and safety concerns. General considerations to keep in mind include the following:
    - Ensure your grain dryer has outward opening doors. This allows for easy inspections, cleanings and maintenance procedures. In addition, in the event of a fire, these doors make it easy to extinguish flames.
    - Inspect grain exchangers, ensuring they are not clogged. Keep exterior screens clean, especially on tower-style dryers.
    - Follow any operational guidelines provided by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM). Install, operate, test, inspect and maintain automated control systems in accordance with OEM instructions.
    - Ensure all bearings are properly lubricated. This can prevent component wear and tear.
    - Inspect and clean fan blades before each use of a grain dryer. Keep all rotating parts in proper balance.
    - Clean surface dirt and rust from your grain dryer to prevent deterioration. Keep exterior screens clean, especially on tower-style dryers.
    - Ensure intake guards are in place and that they are inspected and cleaned regularly.
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## Seeking Additional Protection Through Insurance

Even if you take all the necessary precautions, accidents can still occur. When they do, it's important that your farm is armed with the proper coverage. To learn more about your options, contact a qualified insurance broker at [Awesome Content Cloud Performance](#) today.

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