

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## PRESS RELEASE

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### STABLE OWNERS URGED TO CHECK FIRE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters have attended two separate stable fires at premises on the Drift Road, near Maidenhead, in the last two days.

Luckily, neither incident saw people or horses harmed but did result in the destruction of buildings and the loss of equestrian forage and bedding materials. Owners, proprietors and livery customers are being warned to check that adequate fire safety measures are in place at their yards.

Group Manager Bob Rea, of the RBFRS specialist large animal rescue unit, is also a keen horseman. He said: "These incidents are definitely not linked but have put the risk of fire in the stable environment high on our agenda. One fire, on Wednesday (9 March) we believe to have been started deliberately and we are working with police who are investigating the cause. The second, which happened yesterday (10 March) was caused by sparks from a bonfire, which was being carefully supervised. The embers blew onto a nearby storage building containing hay and straw and quickly spread.

"Thank goodness that no-one was injured and that no horses were hurt on these occasions. We are asking all owners and users of equestrian premises to have a through check to ensure that their premises are as secure as possible and that in the event of fire breaking out, that there are suitable provisions for evacuating staff and horses as quickly and safely as possible.

"Many stables and associated buildings are made of timber and much of what is used or kept there – hay, straw, shavings, grain and feed, rugs, is highly combustible. Many yards store diesel for vehicles and most have electricity supplied to boxes and buildings and it is vital that all yards, whether large or small, have up to date fire safety and evacuation plans in place.

"There is an excellent, free of charge, guide on the Department for Communities and Local Government website, which sets out exactly how to keep your premises secure, reduce the risk of fire but also what to do if a fire does occur. You can find it at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyanimal>

"Last year saw several horses killed in a stable fire and we do not want to be called to another incident like that so I would ask everyone to check their stables tonight and over the weekend and ensure they are as safe as possible."

**ENDS.**

## ***MAKING BERKSHIRE SAFER***

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