



## Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office

23675 Belmont Ridge Road, Suite 150  
Ashburn, Virginia 20148  
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July 17, 2023

Micah Joel Kiger, Deputy Chief / Chief Fire Marshal  
Loudoun County Fire and Rescue  
Fire Marshal's Office  
23675 Belmont Ridge Road, Suite 150  
Ashburn, VA 20148

Re: Agritourism Fire Code Information

Dear Agritourism Professional,

The 2023 General Assembly of Virginia amended and reenacted Code of Virginia §36-99. *Provisions of Code; modifications.* As you are aware, this section impacts our agritourism communities locally. While Farm buildings and structures are exempt from the provisions of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (except for a building or a portion of a building located on a farm that is operated as a restaurant), any farm building or structure (i) where the public is invited to enter for an agritourism activity as defined in §3.2-6400, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes and (ii) that is used for display, sampling, or sale of agricultural, horticultural, floricultural, or silvicultural products produced on a farm or sale of agricultural-related or silvicultural-related items incidental to the agricultural operation *shall* have:

1. Portable fire extinguishers for the purpose of fire suppression;
2. A simple written plan in case of an emergency, but such plan shall not be construed to be interpreted as a fire evacuation plan under the Uniform Statewide Building Code or any other local requirements; and
3. A sign posted in a conspicuous place upon entry to the farm building or structure that states that "This building is EXEMPT from the Uniform Statewide Building Code. Be alert to exits in the event of a fire or other emergencies." Such sign shall be placed in a clearly visible location near the entrance to such farm building or structure. The notice shall consist of a sign no smaller than 24 inches by 36 inches with clearly legible black letters, with each letter to be a minimum of one inch in height.

Under authority of the Fire Official, the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office (LCFR-FMO) *may* inspect all structures and premises for the purposes of ascertaining and causing to be corrected any conditions liable to cause fire, contribute to the spread of fire, interfere with firefighting operations, endanger life, or any violations of the provisions of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code; this includes agritourism sites. It is *not* our intent to

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routinely inspect agritourism sites, nor is it our intent to hinder operations for the agritourism industry. It is, however, our intent to be both an advocate and a resource to help ensure the safety of those visiting your business, that of you and your staff members, and the facility itself.

As Loudoun County has a large network of agritourism venues, the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office is a stakeholder in a position to help guide the future of this industry. The LCFR-FMO provides representation to the Agritourism Event Structure Technical Advisory Committee through an appointment by the Virginia Fire Services Board; having a voice on this committee is extremely important to us locally as this group reviews issues of concern to ensure fire safety and the welfare of the general public at agritourism facilities. It is our hope that with this voice, we will be able to influence attainable, common-sense fire prevention measures that best-serve all parties involved.

As requirements related to agritourism continue to evolve within the Commonwealth of Virginia, the LCFR-FMO and the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System have everyone's best interests in mind; those interests are to ensure safe atmospheres are provided for those within our agritourism communities.

If you need assistance with changes in Code of Virginia §36-99 or have questions regarding fire prevention code or other safety requirements, please use the LCFR-FMO as a resource by contacting (703)737-8600 or by email at [dutyfm@loudoun.gov](mailto:dutyfm@loudoun.gov).

Regards,



Micah Joel Kiger, Deputy Chief / Chief Fire Marshal  
Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office