

STRAW OR HAY BALES FOR PUBLIC EVENTS OR DISPLAY

The Medicine Hat Fire Service is issuing this guideline to all users and suppliers of display straw bales within the City of Medicine Hat.

1) Bales used indoors, outdoors within 3 metres of any permanent or temporary structure, on any patio or near any heat source shall be treated and prepared as outlined in sentence (2) before being allowed into any public venue.

2) The owner, in accordance with AFC Division C Article 2.2.1.2., shall maintain a written record of tests and flame proofing treatment carried out. Treatment shall be as follows:

- Straw or Hay Bales used for indoor or outdoor public displays shall be treated with a Fire Retardant that complies with CAN/ULC - S109-03 "Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films".
- All bales shall be compressed by ten (10) to twelve (12) inches and bound with steel wire or ½ inch steel banding.
- Each bale shall be dried by evaporation.
- Each bale shall be tagged with a non-combustible tag stating the date treated, the ULC approved fire retardant product used and the name of the company doing the treatment.
- If bales should become wet, they shall be immediately removed to the exterior of the building, dried by evaporation and retreated before being used again.
- Bales cannot be broken apart to enhance the display.

3) A Fire Department Inspector may ask to test any display bale at their discretion and the bale shall pass the flame test as described in point (4). If any of the bales tested at this display fail the flame test, all bales shall be removed from the venue and be retreated prior to reuse.

4) Fire Department Inspectors will test bales to be displayed in the following manner:

- Bale will be removed from the public for testing.
- Ignition source will be an open flame as produced from a butane lighter. Flame will be applied for 10 seconds.
- Bale is allowed to ignite, but upon removal of the flame source the bale cannot sustain combustion on its own for more than 3 seconds. Flame must self extinguish and cannot continue to smolder for more than 30 seconds.
- Multiple surfaces on each bale will be tested and must pass the above detailed test.

5) In large open area venues where bales fall outside of the parameters of sentence (1) untreated bales will be permitted to be used under the following conditions:

- Must be a large open area venue
- Must be a minimum of 3 metres away from any permanent or temporary structure
- Must be a minimum of 3 metres away from any heat source
- Must be a minimum of 3 metres away from any entrance or exit to the venue
- Must be a maximum of 5 untreated bales per group
- Must be a minimum of 3 metres spatial separation between bale groups.
- Any bales that become broken apart must be removed from the venue, this includes the loose straw.

6) Upon inspection, if guidelines for untreated bales are not strictly adhered to all untreated bales shall be removed from the venue.