



Fire Marshal's

COMMUNIQUÉ

du commissaire des incendies

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ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS ON FARMS

(External Distribution)

Many large farming operations rely on migrant workers to assist in planting or harvesting crops in a timely manner and, as a result, have a need to provide short-term on-site sleeping accommodations for these workers. It is reported that some farm operations are providing sleeping accommodations for up to 100 workers in converted farm buildings, mobile trailers or purpose-built buildings. Cooking facilities are also included in many of these buildings.

While farm buildings are generally exempt from the [Ontario Fire Code](#) under Article 1.1.6.1., this exemption does not apply to buildings with residential occupancies. The definition for 'farm building' reads as follows:

"Farm building means a building or part thereof associated with and located on land devoted to the practice of farming, and used primarily for the housing of equipment or livestock or the production, storage or processing of agricultural and horticultural produce or feeds, but is not used for residential occupancy."

As such, existing buildings that are used to provide sleeping accommodations for migrant workers are required to comply with the Fire Code. For example, Section 2.13 (installation of smoke alarms) or Part 9 (Retrofit) of the Fire Code are applicable unless the buildings already comply with the Ontario Building Code.

Whereas some smaller facilities may operate as single housekeeping units, buildings providing multiple sleeping rooms may be more appropriately classified as boarding, lodging and rooming houses and fall within the scope of Section 9.3 of the Fire Code. Sleeping accommodations for more than 10 persons provided in an open concept dormitory type arrangement would be subject to Section 9.5 of the Fire

Code. Inspection Orders may be used to deal with fire safety issues in buildings that fall outside the scope of Sections 9.3 and 9.5.

Locations providing accommodations for migrant workers may be identified with the assistance of the regional health units, which may have current listings of farms providing this type of accommodation. Fire departments are advised to notify farming operations of their responsibility to comply with the Fire Code and to visit any sites, as they deem appropriate, to determine whether these sites satisfy fire safety requirements for migrant worker accommodations.

Regional public health units can be located through the Ministry of Health Web site at http://www.healthyonario.com/english/community_resources.asp?channel_id=0§ion_type=s

For further enquiries, please contact the Fire Safety Standards Section of the Office of the Fire Marshal at (416) 325-3100.