



Staying Safe While Farm Sitting

When travelling to farms as a farm sitter can be risky at times. Here are some farm sitting safety tips.

(From "Start a Farm-sitting Business" by Cherie Langlois)

Driving alone to a secluded, deserted farmstead can give even the bravest of women a case of the jitters and for good reason.

"A concern that is always on my mind as a woman pet sitter is break-ins and burglaries," says Funny Farm Barn Care's Kathy Hightshoe. "It can be daunting going to an empty home where the owners will be gone for a week or two—especially the night visits. My husband escorts me most times, but it can still be scary. I try to change my schedule just enough to keep a would-be prowler guessing if I'm going to show up or not."

"In today's [social] climate, a woman has to be careful," adds Christina Wright of Town & Country Pet & Farm Sitter. "I have a cell phone on me 24/7 and I try to make sure I have cell service. At one farm where I didn't get service, I let a friend know how long I would be and gave her directions to the farm. Along with a first aid kit, I carry pepper spray in case I get into trouble with a human or a vicious dog. In seven years, I've never had to use it."

Consider these additional safety tips: Remain observant and alert. Scan the house, outbuildings and surrounding area for signs that might indicate an intruder: a broken window, a door ajar, a strange vehicle. Report anything suspicious to the police.

Bring your spouse or a friend along to your initial meeting with a new client. Pay attention to your intuition: If something feels off, say no to the job.

Take classes in self defense and carry a personal alarm or whistle.

Avoid taking jobs in areas known to have a high crime rate.

Be aware of other potential threats. Animals can be un-predictable; a horse may kick unexpectedly or a frightened dog might bite. You could encounter a nest of yellow jackets while checking fences or step in a hole and twist an ankle. Keep your cell handy and remain vigilant (no daydreaming about last night's "Lost" episode!).