

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire Safety Tips

February 2009

Burn Prevention and Care

The first full week of February is observed as Burn Awareness Week.

In a report done by the American Burn Association, scalds are the most common type of burn with roughly half of the burns treated annually in the United States and Canada being this type. Prevention of scalds is always preferable to treatment and can be accomplished through simple changes in behavior and in the home environment.



Although scald burns can happen to anyone, young children, older adults and people with disabilities and mobility issues are the most likely to incur such injuries.

The skin of children and older adults are not the same as a younger adult's. It is much thinner and more sensitive. What may seem a little warm to a younger adult may be dangerously hot to a child or older adult.

DEGREES OF BURNS

First-degree burns, the mildest of the three, are limited to the top layer of skin:

- *Signs and symptoms:* These burns produce redness, pain, and minor swelling. The skin is dry without blisters.
- *Healing time:* Healing time is about 3 to 6 days; the superficial skin layer over the burn may peel off in 1 or 2 days.

Second-degree burns are more serious and involve the skin layers beneath the top layer:

- *Signs and symptoms:* These burns produce blisters, severe pain, and redness. The blisters sometimes break open and the area is wet looking with a bright pink to cherry red color.
- *Healing time:* Healing time varies depending on the severity of the burn.

Third-degree burns are the most serious type of burn and involve all the layers of the skin and underlying tissue:

- *Signs and symptoms:* The surface appears dry and can look waxy white, leathery, brown, or charred. There may be little or no pain or the area may feel numb at first because of nerve damage.
- *Healing time:* Healing time depends on the severity of the burn. Deep second- and third-degree burns (called full-thickness burns) will likely need to be treated with skin grafts, in which healthy skin is taken from another part of the body and surgically placed over the burn wound to help the area heal.

The severity of a scald is based on two factors:

Time 

Temperature 



Since immediate removal of the hot liquid from the skin may lessen severity, splash and spill burns may not be as deep as burns suffered in a bathtub. Take extreme care when you place your child in a bathtub. Know the temperature of the bath water by actually measuring the temperature before placing your child in the tub.

HOW HOT IS HOT WATER?

The typical setting of a residential hot water heater is 120 degrees. The skin of adults requires an average of five minutes of exposure for a full thickness burn to occur at this temperature. Below is a chart of temperature and the time it takes to have a third degree burn for an adult. Measure the actual temperature of the water in your hot water heater.

Water Temperature

Time to a 3rd Degree Burn

155 degrees

1 second

148 degrees

2 seconds

140 degrees

5 seconds

133 degrees

15 seconds

127 degrees

1 minute

124 degrees

3 minutes

120 degrees

5 minutes

100 degrees

Safe for bathing

Coffee, tea and hot chocolate are usually served at 160 – 180 degrees. Burns are almost instantaneous that will require surgery.



An Ounce of Prevention to Prevent a Lifetime of Pain

Establish a 3 foot **“No Kid Zone”** around the stove (even if no one is cooking).

BURN CARE

Burns are serious and should be treated as a medical emergency. Call 911. Early care of first and second degree burns should include cool, clean water and clean cloths. Folk remedies such as butter, toothpaste, petroleum jelly may seal in the heat, cause infections and generally make things worse.



REFERENCE SOURCE

American Burn Association
*Scald Injury Prevention
Educator's Guide*



United States Fire Administration / FEMA
*Prevent Fire. Save Lives. A Fire Safety
Campaign for People 50-Plus*



http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/emergencies/burns.html



Macomb Township Fire Department
Safe from Fire Initiative

