

news & notes

BURN NOTICE

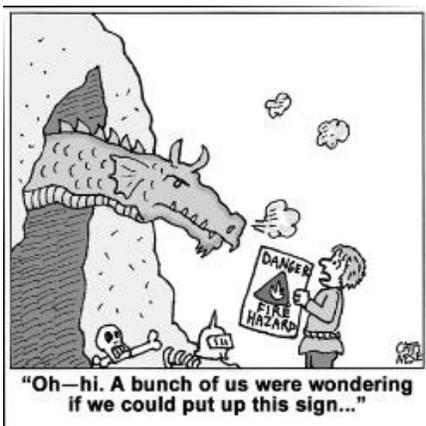
Every year the American Burn Association (ABA) sets aside the **first full week of February** as "**Burn Awareness Week.**" For this year's theme on scalds, the ABA has provided these prevention resources on its website www.ameriburn.org/prevention/BurnAwareness.php:

- Cooking Safety for Older Adults
- Pediatric Scalds
- Consumer Resources for Burn Prevention

According to the ABA, "scald injuries affect all ages," but "young children and the elderly are most vulnerable."

The ABA further reports that "annually in the United States and Canada, over 500,000 people receive medical treatment for burn injuries. Roughly half of these injuries are scalds."

However, scald injuries can be prevented with awareness training and safety precautions.



February 2016

Background on burns

Know how to keep cool and safe

While most burns involve skin, chemical splashes can also burn eye tissue. Workplace burn hazards include:

- Hot liquids (for example, water or grease) or steam;
- Open flames (often involving a fire);
- Hot surfaces;
- Contact with electricity, *and*
- Contact with corrosive chemicals.

Prevent burns by taking these precautions:

- Identify burn hazards related to the task or work area.
- Keep alert while working.
- Avoid reaching over or across hot surfaces or substances.
- Wear assigned personal protective equipment to prevent exposure to chemicals and hot substances and surfaces.
- Follow work rules carefully.
- Read the data safety sheets (SDSs) for chemicals for burn information.
- Be careful around electrical equipment.
- Remember that steam can burn as well as hot liquids.

Workplace burns need prompt, proper attention. **First-degree burns** are the least serious. The affected skin may turn red and be painful. First aid involves:

1. Applying cool water or wrapped ice packs;
2. Covering with a clean cloth or dressing; *and*
3. Taking aspirin or ibuprofen to relieve pain.

Second-degree burns are more serious because the burn goes deeper. The affected skin will be red and blistered. First aid involves:

1. Removing clothing covering the burn, unless it's stuck to the burned skin;
2. Applying cool water or wrapped ice packs;
3. Leaving blisters alone and not breaking them; *and*
4. Getting quick medical attention if the burn covers a large area or is on the face, hands, or genitals.

Third-degree burns are the most severe and may be life-threatening. The affected skin appears white or charred. You may see exposed bones and tendons. Third-degree burns require emergency medical treatment. Don't try to treat third-degree burns or remove clothing that is stuck to the burned area. Instead:

1. Cover the burned area lightly with a clean cloth.
2. Elevate burned limbs.
3. Call for emergency medical assistance.
4. Watch for shock, and administer first aid for this condition if necessary.

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FATAL HOT-WORK EXPLOSIONS

Performing hot work around combustible gases is one of the most common causes of worker deaths, says the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB). Following investigations of several hot-work accidents that killed workers in the past 2 years, CSB has issued a safety bulletin identifying seven key lessons aimed at preventing worker deaths during hot work in and around storage tanks containing flammable materials.

Hot work is activity that involves burning, welding, cutting, brazing, grinding, soldering, or other spark-producing operations that can ignite a flammable atmosphere.

CSB says it started investigating hot-work hazards following an explosion on July 29, 2008, at a corrugated cardboard mill in Wisconsin, which killed three maintenance workers and injured another. CSB determined the explosion resulted from welding above an 80-foot-tall storage tank that contained highly flammable hydrogen gas—the product of bacterial decomposition of organic fiber waste inside the tank.

CSB subsequently investigated explosions ignited by hot work at an oil refinery, a food manufacturer, a produce company, and a waste oil facility, among others. Each incident resulted in worker deaths or severe injuries. CSB says it has identified more than 60 fatalities that have occurred since 1990 as the result of explosions and fires caused by hot work.

CSB has produced several computer-animated safety videos on hot-work accidents. The safety bulletin and videos are available at <http://www.csb.gov>.



Background on burns quiz

Test what you know

Choose the correct response for the following statements.

1. Burn hazards on the job may include contact with steam, flame, hot equipment, and certain chemicals. **True False**
2. The most serious burns are:
a. First-degree burns b. Second-degree burns c. Third-degree burns
3. The first thing to do for a third-degree burn is to:
a. Get immediate medical attention.
b. Apply wrapped ice packs or cool water.
c. Check safety data sheet (SDS) instructions.
4. The first thing to do for a first-degree burn is to:
a. Get immediate medical attention.
b. Apply wrapped ice packs or cool water.
c. Check SDS instructions.
5. The best place to find first-aid information for a chemical burn is the chemical's:
a. Required personal protective equipment instructions
b. Storage instructions
c. SDS instructions

ANSWERS

1. True. 2. c. Third-degree burns. 3. a. Get immediate medical attention. 4. b. Apply wrapped ice packs or cool water. 5. c. SDS.

Flesh-Eating Chemicals?

Yes! Corrosives can be very hazardous

Corrosive chemicals can:

- Attack skin, eyes, and other tissue
- Attack other materials
- Contribute to fire hazards
- Generate heat and hydrogen gas
- Be toxic when inhaled

Corrosives are most often thought of as being liquids, such as sulfuric acid and other corrosive acids. But they can also be caustic granules or powders. And corrosive gases or mists are often released from concentrated corrosive liquids. When you work with these materials, read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) and the container label for safety information, such as the health hazards, symptoms of exposure, required personal protective equipment, and safe handling procedures.

Also check the MSDS for first aid for specific materials. Here are the basics:

- Corrosives in the eyes—flush with water for about 15 minutes
- Corrosives on the skin—flush with water and remove contaminated clothes
- Inhalation—move into fresh air
- Swallowing—follow MSDS instructions and call for emergency medical help

A follow-up visit to the doctor is recommended for any exposure to corrosives.