
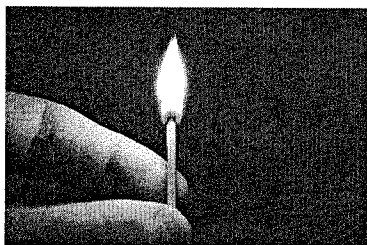


# SafetyToolboxTopics

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## National Burn Awareness Week

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This week (first full week of February) is National Burn Awareness Week in the United States. Let's look at some quick facts about burn injuries:

- Burn Injuries Receiving Medical Treatment Per Year: 500,000
- Fire and Burn Deaths Per Year: 4,000
- Hospitalizations for Burn Injury Per Year: 40,000 total, including 25,000 admissions to hospitals with specialized burn centers
- Burn Cause: 46% fire/flame, 32% scald, 8% hot object contact, 4% electrical, 3% chemical, 6% other
- Place of Occurrence: 43% home, 17% street/highway, 8% occupational, 32% other

Although very few burn injuries occur at work compared to home, the risk is still around us. Steam pipes, electrical arc flashes, hot machine components and chemicals are just a few of the areas where you have exposure to burn injuries.

Your best protection for these types of exposures is awareness. More often than not, people get burned at work by coming in contact with hot components unexpectedly. They didn't realize the component was hot or they weren't aware of their body's position to the object. Take some extra time when around these areas of the facility to ensure you know the hazard and make a conscious effort to keep away from these hot components.

The other line of defense for these injuries is to wear PPE when working in close proximity to these burn hazards. Whether using rubber gloves when working with chemicals or thermal gloves when dealing with steam lines, PPE can afford you the protection you need.

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# Preventing Burns in the Workplace

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There are three main types of burns that are common in the workplace; thermal (heat), chemical, and electrical. Review your potential for these types of injuries and implement controls to reduce the likelihood of injury to an employee. Below are reminders how to avoid the various types of burns mentioned above.

## **THERMAL (HEAT):**

- Reduce exposure to or contact with steam, flames, flash and hot surfaces or hot liquids with a temperature above 115 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep sparks and open flames away from combustible and flammable materials. Don't allow debris to accumulate in your work area.
- Have maintenance employees wear flame resistant clothing.
- Avoid reaching over or through hot surfaces, pipes or chemicals.
- Pipes can break under pressure. Ensure line breaking procedures are followed before you begin work.
- If you are not sure if equipment is hot, do not approach or touch without the proper protective equipment. When it comes to burn hazards, always use extra caution.

If exposed to thermal heat source:

- Move the person to a safe area and stop the burning. If clothing is in flames or smoldering, stop, drop, and roll the person to extinguish the flames.
- For a first degree burn, immerse the body part in cool water. Have the person drink water and elevate the burned body part to reduce swelling.
- For a second degree burn, follow the steps for treating a first degree burn but do not apply cold water. Cover any blisters with a dry, non-sticking sterile dressing.
- For a third degree burn, cover the burn with dry, sterile, nonstick dressing, treat for shock and seek immediate medical attention.

## **CHEMICAL:**

- Store and handle chemicals correctly and according to directions. Read labels and the SDS for any chemical you work with.
- Read chemical labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) sheets.
- Make sure to wear all appropriate PPE for the chemical.
- Know the location of the nearest first aid, eye wash station and fire equipment before beginning the job functions.
- Know what types of chemicals are being used and what precautions need to be taken to avoid a burn.

If exposed to a chemical:

- Remove contaminated clothing.
- Brush off any loose powder and flush the area with water for a minimum of 20 minutes.
- If the chemical has gotten into the eye, flush the eye with clean, clear water from a low pressure source. Keep the eye open when flushing.

**ELECTRICAL:**

- When performing electrical work, follow Lock-Out/Tag-Out procedures and wear appropriate clothing and PPE.
- Know what electrical sources exist in your workplace.
- Train employees on electrical safety.
- Mark overhead powerlines and train equipment operators as to their location.
- Know proper clearance distances from powerlines to avoid an arc.

If exposed to electricity:

- Make the scene safe. Turn off the power.
- Do not approach the injured person until the power is off.
- Check the airway, breathing and circulation. Treat for shock.
- Seek immediate medical attention.
- Stay inside of vehicle or equipment that has contacted an overhead powerline until the scene is safe.

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