

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



November 22, 2010

Safety Tips: First Aid for Burns



MISSISSIPPI STATE  
UNIVERSITY

According to statistics from the **United States Fire Administration (USFA)**, every year more than 4,000 Americans die as results of fires and more than 23,000 are injured seriously enough to require hospitalization. The study revealed that 1.25 million people suffer burn injuries each year.

## WHAT CAUSES BURNS?

A burn involves the destruction of skin cells, and sometimes the underlying structures of muscle, fascia and bone. It happens when these structures absorb more heat than they can dissipate. The action you take with a burn in the first few minutes after the occurrence can make a difference in the severity of the injury. You can get burned by heat, radiation, sunlight, electricity or chemicals in three degrees of burns described below;

- **First Degree** – Red and painful with little swelling. They turn white when you press the skin. The skin over the burn may peel off after one or two days.
- **Second Degree** – Thicker, very painful and typically produces blisters on the skin. The skin is red and splotchy, and may be swollen.
- **Third Degree** – Causes damage to all layers to the skin. The burned skin looks white or charred. These burns may cause little or no pain because the nerves and tissue in the skin are damaged.

## SAFETY TIPS –

- **STOP THE BURNING PROCESS** – Remove the source of heat. If clothing catches on fire, then “**Stop, Drop, and Roll**” to smother the flames.
- **REMOVE ALL BURNED CLOTHING** – Clothing may keep in the heat and cause a deeper injury. If clothing sticks to the skin, cool the material or cut or tear around the area to preserve good skin tissue.
- **POUR COOL WATER OVER THE BURNED AREA** – Keep pouring the cool water for at least 3-5 minutes. Never put ice or cold water on a burn as it lowers body temperature and can make the burn worse.
- **REMOVE ALL JEWELRY, BELTS, TIGHT CLOTHING, METAL, ETC.** – Remove from burned area and around the neck-swelling of burned areas occurs immediately.
- **DO NOT APPLY OINTMENT, DREAMS OR SALVES TO THE WOUNDS.** These things may cause an infection due to the oil in them. They also can hold in heat, making the wound worse. They would have to be washed off by a physician, making the patient have more discomfort.
- **COVER BURNS WITH A SOFT, CLEAN, DRY DRESSING, BANDAGE OR SHEET.**

- **COVER VICTIM TO KEEP HIM/HER WARM.**
- **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION A.S.A.P.**

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS-

- **For Minor Burn injuries** – Keep clean, gently, wash with a mild soap. Use an antiseptic spray or cream to help relieve pain and prevent infection before applying a clean, dry dressing. If wounds are not healing, appear weepy, or smell bad, seek medical help.
- **Electrical injuries:** Do not touch the person who is in contact with electricity. **YOU WILL BE INJURED!** Disconnect the power source or call for assistance from the power company, then begin first aid. Primary concerns are to clean the airways, breathing, circulation and cervical spine immobilization – then look for other injuries.
- **Chemical Injuries** – Protect yourself from contact with the chemical. Read the container label information or consult the Poison Control Center before administering first aid for specific chemical reactions. Dry Chemicals – brush as much of the dry chemical off as possible and remove it from the affected area for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes or until medical professional tells you to stop. Remove the patient’s clothing, including shoes, before flushing with water. If the chemical is in or near the victim’s eye, check for contact lenses, which should be removed before irrigation of the eye. Don’t flush parts of the body that aren’t contaminated.

## TIPS TO PREVENT BURN ACCIDENTS-

- Keep sparks and open flames away from combustible and flammable materials.
- Practice good housekeeping – dispose of scrap materials promptly and properly.
- Always keep chemicals in their original containers with labels.
- Use chemicals safely, check the MSDS
- Use caution when pouring hot chemicals including morning coffee.
- Observe all electrical codes.
- Lock out / tag out energy sources before working on machinery or equipment.
- Cover live electrical panels and post warning signs.
- Wear the correct personal protective equipment for the job.

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.-MAFES-MSU-ES  
662-566-2201

Excerpts: [www.burninstitute.org/www.pacificemployers.com](http://www.burninstitute.org/www.pacificemployers.com)