VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5 FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Weekly Safety Meeting

Treating Burns

A burn can be painful or painless, according to the degree. The degree of a burn is determined by its location on the body and the number of skin layers affected. Heat, electricity, chemicals, or radiation can cause a burn. The first response in a burn situation is to stop the heat source or break contact between the heat source and the skin. The body holds in the heat and continues to burn until the skin cools. In many cases you can cool the burn with water. Unless told to by a medical professional, never use butter or ointments; they seal in heat and may cause infection. If blisters form, they should not be broken because they protect the burn from infection.

When we think of burns, mostly we think of heat burns. And it's true that these are the most common. But there are other ways to get burned as well. Some chemicals, like corrosives, can burn the skin, sometimes very seriously. Contact with electric current can also burn--and not just your skin. Electricity running through your body can burn organs and other deep tissues. And then there are sunburns. Keep in mind, these may be a problem on or off the job.

Severity and Classification of Burns:

Identifying the severity of the burn is the first step to administering first aid.

First degree burns are identified by redness of skin and are generally considered to be uncomfortable. First degree burns are painful but not severe and generally heal on their own with little treatment.

Second degree burns are very painful. The burns are generally identified by blistering and extreme redness of skin.

Third degree burns may cause charring, whiteness, and permanent discoloration of skin though no pain may be present due to nerve damage.

Burns can be considered life threatening.

First Degree Burns:

Cool the area right away.

Place the affected area in a container of cold water or under cold running water. Do this for at least 15 minutes or until the pain is relieved.

This will also reduce the amount of skin damage. (If the affected area is dirty, gently wash it with soapy water first.)

1-855-784-2677 safetyunlimited.com info@safetyunlimited.com
2139 Tapo Street, Suite 228, Simi Valley, CA 93063-3478

Do not apply ice or cold water for too long a time. This may result in complete numbness leading to frostbite. Keep the area uncovered and elevated, if possible. Apply a dry dressing, if necessary.

Do not use butter or ointments like Vaseline or Aquaphor.

Avoid using local anesthetic sprays and creams.

They can slow healing and may lead to allergic reactions in some people.

Call your doctor if after 2 days you show signs of infection (fever of 101°F or higher, chills, increased redness, swelling, or pus in the infected area) or if the affected area is still painful.

Second Degree Burns:

Immerse the affected area in cold (not ice) water until the pain subsides.

Dip clean clothes in cold water, wring them out and apply them over and over again to the burned area for as long as an hour.

Blot the area dry.

Do not rub. Do not break any blisters that have formed.

Avoid applying antiseptic sprays, ointments, and creams.

Once dried, dress the area with a single layer of loose gauze that does not stick to the skin.

Hold in place with bandage tape that is placed well away from the burned area.

Change the dressing the next day and every two days after that.

Prop the burnt area higher than the rest of the body, if possible.

Call your doctor if there are signs of infection (fever of 101°F or higher, chills, increased redness and swelling, and pus) or if the burn shows no sign of improvement after 2 days.

Third Degree Burns:

All third-degree burns require medical treatment.

Minor third-degree burns can be treated in a doctor's office, but all others should be considered a medical emergency that requires hospital treatment, usually in a burn unit.

Call 911 or get the person to an emergency room as soon as possible.

If the person is on fire, do not let him or her run. Smother any flames with a blanket, jacket, or water, if available, or have the victim use the "stop, drop, and roll" method.

Remove any clothing or jewelry from the injured area, but DO NOT remove clothing if it is stuck to the burn.

Very briefly immerse the burned area in cold water or use a clean towel or washcloth moistened with cold water to stop the burning process.

Don’t hold the burned area in cold water for too long or you will cool down the body too much.

Don’t use ice or ice water because they will further damage the tissue.

Do not break open any blisters or there will be a greater risk of infection. If the blisters are open, don’t remove any clothing that might be stuck to the burn and don’t run water over the burn. This will increase the risk of shock.

Whether the blisters are broken or not, you can place a dry, sterile gauze pad over the burn, but do not use any bandages with adhesive. If the burned area is larger, lightly drape a clean sheet over it to protect it until you get medical treatment. It is important for the bandage to be loose, so the burn gets air.

Never apply butter, oils, or burn ointments. They make it more difficult for the burn to heal and can actually make the burn worse because the heat can’t escape.

Arms or legs that are burned should be kept raised to reduce the amount of swelling. If the face or neck is burned, raise the person’s head slightly. This will also help if he or she is having trouble breathing.

If the person appears to be going into shock, lay him or her flat on the ground, raise the feet around 12 inches (30 cm), and call for medical help. You can cover the patient with a blanket to keep him or her warm.

Do not give a person who is in shock anything to drink. Otherwise, you can provide the patient with small sips of clear liquid, such as water or juice.

SAFETY IS A FULL-TIME JOB…DON’T MAKE IT A PART TIME PRACTICE!!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests