



British Columbia Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund

BURN AWARENESS WEEK 2012 SAFETY TIPS

Hot water scalds are the leading cause of burns to young children. The vast majority of these burn injuries are preventable.

- When using water taps, turn COLD water on first. Then add HOT water and adjust the temperature. Reverse the order when turning water off: HOT water first, then the COLD water.
- Always test young children's bath and sink water before using. When bathing children, never leave them unattended as they may turn on the hot water or slip in your absence.
- Be very careful when drinking HOT liquids, especially around children. At 60°C (140°F) it takes less than five seconds to get a third degree (full thickness) burn. Children and older adults, by virtue of their thinner skin, sustain severe burns at lower temperatures and in less time than an adult.

Playing with matches and lighters is one of the leading causes of fire deaths to young children. The vast majority of these burn injuries are preventable.

- Matches and lighters are tools for grownups, and not toys to be played with. Reinforce the concept that like power tools or a knife, the match is a tool with specific uses, such as lighting a stove or a candle, or for starting campfires.
- Discuss GOOD FIRES and BAD FIRES and how matches and lighters are to be used in a responsible manner.
- Discuss the importance of keeping all matches and lighters stored high out of the reach of young children. It reduces the temptation to experiment with fire. If need be, lock up matches and lighters.

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- Discuss strategies for children on how they can get out of situations that involve fire setting and peer pressure. Define issues such as arson and the law, children taking responsibility for fire-setting actions, paying restitution and making good choices.

On average, every person in this country will experience at least two kitchen fires during their lifetime.

- Discuss the dangers around the stove. Teach children to never touch anything on the stove, or to open the oven. Children should not use stoves until they are old enough to safely handle items, reach cooking surfaces, and are mature enough to understand safety procedures in the kitchen.
- Instruct children to stay away from adults who are busy preparing food, carrying pots or using appliances. Adults should always turn pot handles inward (pointing toward the middle of the stove) when cooking. This will help prevent children from pulling hot food down on themselves.
- Children should be supervised while in the kitchen. Talk about safe places to play. The kitchen is not one of them.
- Discuss the dangers of climbing on counters or getting too close to hot appliances like the coffee pot, toaster, hot pots or pans and hot food.
- Kitchen and appliance safety is important in every household. Burns received in the kitchen are usually a result of scalds from hot foods or liquids, or contact burns from hot appliances. More fires start in the kitchen than any other location in the home.
- Teach and practice **STOP, DROP & ROLL**. If a child's clothes catch on fire, they **STOP** where they are, cover their face with their hands (unless their hands are burning), **DROP** to the ground, and **ROLL** over and over until the fire is out.

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Cooling the burned area will lessen the severity of the injury if the procedure is performed immediately following the burn incident.

- Children need to know the correct procedure for cooling a burn injury. Within seconds of a burn injury the burned area should be placed in, or flushed with, cool water. Keep the burned area in the cool water for 10 to 15 minutes. NEVER use ice, ointments or butter.
- If they are burned, tell children to immediately seek assistance from an adult.
- If the burn injury is severe, immediately seek emergency assistance. Instruct children how to dial 9-1-1, or your community's local emergency number.
- Children have thinner skin than adults. They will sustain more severe burns at lower temperatures and in a shorter period of time.
- Exposure for just five seconds to water which is 60°C (140°F) can result in a full thickness or third degree burns, which would require hospitalization and skin grafts. (This is the temperature of the average home's hot water as it comes from the tap.)

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Media Contact: Nola Laubach (604-436-5617) / E-Mail: <mailto:pr@burnfund.org>

Available for interview:

Tim Baillie, BCPFF Burn Fund Director and Chair, Burn Awareness Week Program, and Burn Fund Local Representatives in fifty-three communities throughout British Columbia are available to discuss Burn Awareness tips. Many of the fire departments hold in-school fire and scald safety demonstrations during Burn Awareness Week.