

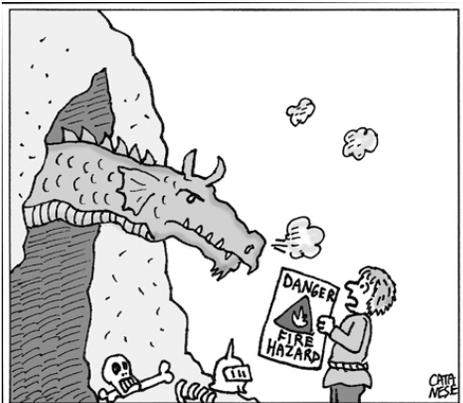
**BURN AWARENESS**

Burns are a common workplace injury. When they're not too serious, they can usually be effectively treated with simple first aid. But some burns can be more serious—even life threatening—and these require immediate professional medical attention as well as appropriate on-the-spot first aid.

This means you need to know how to treat minor burns and how to care for more serious burns until help arrives. And you need to be able to identify the difference between a bad burn and a minor one, too.

How bad a burn is depends on how many layers it affects. Minor heat burns just affect the outer layer of skin. They may be uncomfortable, but they aren't a big health risk. Deeper burns that injure or destroy the next layer of skin, however, are a cause for concern. When this layer is affected, infection is a risk that has to be controlled. The most serious burns go really deep and injure or destroy muscle and nerve tissue.

The least serious burns are known as "first-degree" burns because they only affect the first layer of skin. The most serious burns are "third-degree" burns. First-degree burns are easy to identify. The top layer of skin gets red right away. Second-degree burns involve both reddened skin and some blistering. Third-degree burns look charred, and you might be able to see tissue underneath the destroyed skin that appears white.



"Oh—hi. A bunch of us were wondering if we could put up this sign..."

**Riddle of the Month**

My life is often a volume of grief.  
Your help is needed to turn a new leaf.  
Stiff is my spine and my body is pale,  
but I am always ready to tell a tale...  
What am I?

**Answer on page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces**

# Safety Matters



Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Issue XLII

February 2010

## Beware Burn Hazards

### The first step to protection

Because there are so many potential burn hazards on the job, you need to be alert to their presence. Take precautions to prevent fires and contact with heat when you encounter any of the following burn hazards:

- **Flammable liquids** such as oil, solvents, and many chemicals often have invisible vapors that move quickly through the air. Put them together with an ignition source—even a spark—and you could have a fire.
- **Smoking** is a hazard because lit cigarettes or matches can be an ignition source for paper, flammable liquids, or almost anything that's capable of burning.
- **Welding and cutting operations** create flames and sparks, so they're a potential cause of burns themselves and of fires.
- **Hot machines and processes** are another potential burn hazard.
- **Space heaters** can, if not used properly, cause fires—and, therefore, burns.
- **Very hot water** is yet another burn hazard.

Also be aware of electrical hazards that could burn you directly or cause electrical fires. These hazards include:

- Wiring with frayed or worn insulation
- Overloaded circuits, fuses, motors, or outlets
- Loose ground connections
- Lights or machinery that come in contact with combustible materials
- Direct contact with power lines or other live wires

Know when the chemicals you use are a potential burn hazard by using your basic chemical information tools:

- Container labels
- Material safety data sheets

If they tell you a substance can catch fire under certain circumstances or that it can burn your skin on contact, you know you have to take precautions.

**SafetyTip of the Month**

When using the microwave, follow these safety tips:  
Use only containers designed for microwave use.

Allow food to cool before removing it from the microwave.

Prevent steam burns by removing lids carefully. Stir thoroughly to distribute heat evenly.

Test the temperature and make sure the heated noodles, pasta dishes or 'pocket' food has cooled to a safe temperature before serving to children.

Never microwave a baby bottle.

## ELECTRICAL FIRES

Electricity is the most common cause of workplace fires. To prevent those fires, and protect yourself from electrical burns, take these precautions:

- **Check wiring on all tools and equipment**, including lights and extension cords, before use. If the insulation that covers the wire is worn or frayed, report it immediately.
- **Don't overload circuits**, fuses, motors, or outlets.
- **Match plugs to outlets**. Don't ever force a 3-pronged grounded plug into a 2-pronged outlet.
- **Ensure connections are tight**.
- **Keep machines and tools lubricated** and don't let grease, dust, or dirt build up on them.
- **Dispose of flammable and combustible trash in assigned containers**—and keep all such trash away from electrical lights and machinery.
- **Don't touch anything electrical with wet hands** or while standing on a wet surface.
- **Keep electrical tools away from water**.

## SAFETY FROM HEAD ...

Hard hats need to be inspected before each use for cracks or dents. Replace a headband that's stretched or worn. Replace the whole hat if the shell is cracked, broken, or punctured, and if it has taken a heavy blow, even if it doesn't show damage.

Replace hard hats after 2 years when they are worn in work environments that include sunlight, chemicals, or extreme temperatures. Most manufacturers mold date codes or symbols into the underside of the brim of a hard hat to indicate when it was made. Learn how to read the code/symbol. Check with your supplier for recommended expiration dates.

## ... TO TOE

Many workers face potential foot hazards. You must use safety shoes with impact protection if you carry or work with heavy items that may fall onto your feet.

Shoes or boots with compression protection are important if you work with manual carts and objects such as barrels or bulk paper rolls, or face the hazard of objects rolling over your feet.

You may need shoes with extra metatarsal protection to shield your insteps from impact and compression hazards.

If you work in areas where you may step on objects—nails, scrap metal, wires, tacks that would pierce shoes, you need to wear safety shoes with puncture protection.

If you face electrical hazards you must wear nonconductive, insulated safety shoes that would break an electrical circuit.

## Riddle of the Month Answer:

A book

# Burn Ward

## Know how to treat burns

Proper first aid can be a life and death proposition in some burn cases; in others, it can help ensure that a less serious burn heals.

- **STOP, DROP, AND ROLL**. Memorize this sequence so you won't hesitate for a second if you or your clothing catch fire. Stop where you are, drop to the floor or ground, cover your face with your hands to protect it and your lungs, and roll over and over to smother the flames.
- If someone else's clothing is on fire, wrap that person in a rug or blanket to smother the flames. Once the fire is out, cut away any loose clothing, but don't remove clothing if it's stuck to a burn.
- Soak a first or second degree burn in cold water for at least five minutes. Don't apply oil, butter, or lotion to a burn. And don't pack the burn in ice or rub burned skin.
- After soaking the burned skin, cover it with a clean (preferably sterile), moist cloth. If arms or legs are burned, elevate them.
- Don't break any skin blisters; if they break on their own, leave them alone.
- Burns often require medical attention. See a doctor right away for all burns that:
  - Appear to be third-degree (white or charred skin);
  - Blister;
  - Affect the hands, feet, or face;
  - Cover more than 10 percent of the body; *or*
  - Cause pain for 48 hours.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

Entering a small country store, a stranger saw a sign saying, "Beware of the dog." He looked around but all he could see was a harmless old dog lying fast asleep on the floor next to the counter. The stranger said to the store manager: "Is that the dog folks are supposed to be aware of?"

"Yep," replied the manager.

"Well, he doesn't look dangerous to me. Why did you put the sign up?"

"Because people kept tripping over him!"

## QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

*"It seems only the old are able to sit next to one another and not say anything and still feel content. The young, brash and impatient, must always break the silence. It is a waste, for silence is pure. Silence is holy. It draws people together because only those who are comfortable with each other can sit without speaking. This is the great paradox."*

NICHOLAS SPARKS, *The Notebook*

# Cold Quiz

## Stay safe outside this winter

1. The body parts most at risk for frostbite are:
  - a. The nose, ears, cheeks, fingers, and toes
  - b. The legs
  - c. The stomach
2. Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature gets dangerously low.
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. The risks of hypothermia increase when it's windy and you're:
  - a. Exhausted or wearing wet clothes
  - b. Dressed too heavily
  - c. Drinking warm beverages
4. Clothing will best protect against frostbite and hypothermia if it's
  - a. Tight
  - b. Loose and layered
  - c. Light-colored
5. When you're going to work in cold conditions, cover your head.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. If you get wet or feel uncomfortably chilled when working in cold:
  - a. Ignore it
  - b. Take a break in a warm place
  - c. Drink hot coffee with brandy
7. Symptoms of frostbite include:
  - a. Red eyes
  - b. Skin that's pink, then blue
  - c. Skin that's glossy white or grayish yellow

## Answers

1. a. 2. a. True. 3. a. 4. b. 5. a. True. 6. b. 7. c.