

DON'T GET BURNED!

Burn injuries are among the most traumatic injuries the human body can endure. A serious burn injury affects all bodily systems and can lead to multiple surgeries, disfigurement and emotional scarring.

There are three types of burns: thermal, chemical and electrical. Thermal burns are caused by contact with open fires, hot liquids, hot surfaces and other sources of high heat. A scald burn is a type of thermal burn. The most serious scald burns occur in the bathtub, while the greatest number of scald burns occurs in the kitchen. Burn injuries common to children are also common to adults. While the injuries are similar, the causes differ. Most scald burns can be prevented!

In the kitchen, always keep pot handles turned in and keep hot liquids and other hot items away from the edge of the table or counter. It is always best to use the rear burners on the stove whenever possible. This way, pots or pans cannot be pulled or knocked off the stove. Establish an area close to the stove that is off limits to small children. Turn off the heat source when you are about to reach over the stove. Always be extremely careful when handling hot foods or liquids, especially when you carry them. Watch whenever hot food or liquids are placed on a table that has a tablecloth, as a child can pull on the tablecloth and pull the hot food or beverage down on them. Never store foods that are tempting to children close to the stove area, as they might reach across a hot burner to get to that food. Use pot mitts or gloves to handle hot pots and pans.

Keep all combustible materials away from the cooking areas on a stove. Wear snug fitting clothing that cannot come into contact with a flame or cooking element. Reaching across the stove could cause clothing to catch fire. Try to wear short sleeves, or roll up the sleeve to the elbow. Use an elastic band to keep any loose fitting clothing away from the stove area. Clothing made of pure polyester, nylon or wool are more flame resistant.

Be careful when heating food or liquids in a microwave oven, as hot steam from the container can cause scald burns. This is especially true when removing a wrapper or cover from a hot item. Cooking eggs in a microwave can cause burns unless very specific precautions are taken. Food can heat unevenly in a microwave oven, which can cause serious burns to the mouth, use extreme caution. Microwave ovens vary in cooking power, determine safe power and time settings for your microwave oven. Always check the microwave oven manual for specific care and use instructions. Be sure that everyone who uses the microwave oven understands how to use it and know the risks. If a child is going to use a microwave oven, an adult should monitor them closely.

All appliance cords should be kept away from the edge of the counter. Keep these appliance cords unplugged and disconnected when the appliance is not in use.

Tap water that is too hot causes many burns and can be prevented. Keep the water from your sinks, showers and bathtubs no higher than 125 degrees Fahrenheit. At 130 degrees, a severe scald burn could occur in only 30 seconds, and at 140 degrees, a severe scald burn can occur in only 5 seconds. Run cool water first into a bathtub or shower and then add hot water. Always turn off the hot water faucet first, then the cold water faucet. Always check the temperature of the water before a child uses that water, and remember that a child's skin is more sensitive. Check for any hot spots by running your entire hand through the water. Never allow children to play with faucets. Do not leave children unattended for any reason. If you must leave the room, take your child with you.

Always refuel engines that run on a liquid fuel outside, where there is adequate ventilation. If someone does get burned, immediately remove the victim from the heat source; place the wound in cool water for 15 minutes. Do not put butter or other ointments, oils, or sprays on the wound. Cover the burn with a sterile pad and gauze. If the burn blisters or turns dark, contact a doctor immediately. Remove rings, belts, shoes and tight clothing before swelling occurs. If clothing is stuck to the burn, do not remove

it; carefully cut around the stuck fabric. All burns to the face, hands and feet should receive medical treatment.

If your sleeve should catch on fire, immediately cover the burning area with a towel, mitt, or other item that is available to smother the fire. Then go to the sink and run cold water on it to fully extinguish the fire and cool the burn. If other parts of the clothing you are wearing catch fire - STOP! DROP! ROLL! With regard to a chemical burn, remove contaminated clothing, but avoid spreading the chemical to unaffected areas. Flush the skin with water for at least 20 minutes. If eyes are involved, flush the eyes thoroughly with water until medical assistance is available. If a dry chemical is involved, do not use water, carefully brush the chemical off of the skin and follow package instructions emergency treatment. In the case of electrical burns, turn off the source of electricity by pulling an electric plug or turning off the power. Never touch the individual while they are still subject to the electrical current. Fire safety is something that everyone needs to be aware of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not wait until it is too late, practice fire safety every day!

The volunteers of the Fort Washington Fire Company bring this information to you. If you have any questions or comments about this article, please feel free to call the Fire Company on their business line at 215-646-2555 or stop into either fire station any Monday night. Their Fire Prevention Committee is available to present programs upon request.