

news & notes

BURN STATISTICS

Here's why knowing first aid for burns is important:

- Every year in the United States, 1.1 million burn injuries require medical care.
- Around 50,000 people require hospitalization.
- Almost 10,000 people die of burn-related infections.

BURN HAZARDS

Learn how to recognize burn hazards, such as the following:

- **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 and of fires.
- **Hot machines and processes** are a burn hazard.
- **Space heaters** can, if not used properly, cause fires and burns.
- **Very hot water** is a burn hazard.



"Yeah, my skin's totally red, all over. Probably a first-degree burn, you say?"

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Provided by Hiert Insurance, Inc

(Don't) Feel the Burn

First aid for burns

February 5 to 11 is **National Burn Awareness Week**, a good time to acknowledge that burns are a common workplace injury. How bad a burn is depends on how many layers it affects. First-degree burns affect only the first layer of skin, which gets red right away. Second-degree burns involve both reddened skin and some blistering. Third-degree burns look charred, and you might even be able to see tissues that appear to be white underneath the destroyed skin. Protect yourself from burn pain—and possibly serious infection—by knowing first aid for burns.

For first- and second-degree burns:

- Treat with cold water for several minutes to cool the burn and relieve pain.
- After soaking, cover the burn with a clean dry dressing, e.g., sterile gauze or a bandage from the first-aid kit, to prevent infection.
- **Don't** use ice, lotion, or ointment on a burn.
- **Don't** break blisters that form on a second-degree burn.
- See a doctor if the burn covers a large area or gets infected.

For third-degree burns:

- Call for emergency medical assistance immediately.
- Lay the victim down and elevate severely burned limbs.
- Cut away clothing if necessary, but don't try to remove clothing that is stuck to a burn.

For chemical burns:

- Call for emergency medical assistance if the burn covers a large area of the body or affects the eyes or face.
- Flush burned areas with water until emergency medical help arrives.
- Remove contaminated clothing, if possible.

For critical burns that can kill, the Red Cross says to get immediate medical attention. Critical burns include those that:

- Make it difficult for a victim to breathe.
- Cover a significant portion of the body.
- Involve the head, neck, hands, feet, or genitals.
- Are caused by chemicals, electricity, or explosions.

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PRODUCTIVITY COSTS OF DRINKING

The cost of excessive alcohol consumption in the United States reached \$223.5 billion, according to a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). About three-quarters of that is related to binge drinking.

That means four or more alcoholic beverages per occasion for women and five or more for men.

Excessive consumption, also referred to as heavy drinking, is defined as consuming more than one drink per day for women and an average of more than two per day for men.

CDC found that 72 percent of the total cost resulted from losses in workplace productivity.

Also cited were healthcare expenses, law enforcement, and motor vehicle crashes.

Overall, researchers calculated that excessive drinking cost \$746 per person in the United States in 2006, the most recent year studied.

The study, *Economic Costs of Excessive Alcohol Consumption in the U.S., 2006*, was published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* and is available at www.ajpmonline.org.



Step Up to Ladder Safety

Work safely above ground level

Take these steps to work safely on ladders:

- **CHOOSE** a ladder tall and strong enough for the job.
- **CHECK** that ladders have all parts in good condition, including:
 - Slip-resistant steps or rungs
 - Braces, bolts, screws, and spreaders
 - Rope
 - Safety feet
- **WORK** cautiously on a ladder to prevent falls. Remember to:
 - Allow one person only on a ladder, wearing shoes with clean, nonskid soles.
 - Face the ladder and hold both rails while climbing.
 - Carry tools on a belt or rope or hoist.
 - Stay below the top two stepladder steps or four top ladder rungs.
 - Work with body centered, one hand on rail, and tools in hanger or holder.
- **POSITION** the ladder for steadiness with:
 - Ground surface level
 - Feet parallel to the wall at a distance that is equal to one-fourth the ladder length
 - At least 3 feet above top support with top anchored, and bottom tied or held

WARNING: Don't use a metal ladder around electricity!

Cold-Related Illness and Injury

Know the seven risk factors

In addition to cold temperatures and windy conditions:

1. **Inadequate or wet clothing** increases the risk because they do not provide sufficient insulation from cold temperatures.
2. **Drug use or certain medications** can inhibit the body's response to the cold or even impair judgment so that the victim does not realize he or she is suffering symptoms of a cold-related disorder. Avoid drugs, alcohol, caffeine, and cigarettes when working in cold conditions.
3. **Some medical conditions**, such as a cold, heart disease, asthma, bronchitis, diabetes, atherosclerosis, hypothyroidism, and even poor blood circulation, may increase risk of suffering a cold-related illness or injury. Get a physical evaluation by a medical doctor before working in cold conditions.
4. **Males** have higher death rates in cold conditions than females. Some suspected reasons include body fat composition or other physiological differences. Also, males may engage in risk-taking behaviors more often.
5. **Older workers** become more susceptible to cold-related illness and injury.
6. **Exertion in cold** can constrict blood vessels in the heart. Workers with coronary diseases have an increased risk of heart attack when working in cold conditions.
7. **Overweight people**, those who have had inadequate rest, or are physically unfit are more susceptible to cold-related illness and injury.