Burn First Aid on the Jobsite

Scalds and burns are potentially life-changing injuries that can lead to severe pain, lost time at work and permanent damage to skin. Hot surfaces, flammable liquids, gas motors, welding equipment and electricity are common burn hazards on the jobsite. It is important that you use extreme caution when working with or around these things, and that you know what to do should you or a co-worker get burned.

Types of Workplace Burns

Thermal Burns — Thermal burns are burns caused by the heat from liquids (called "scalding" burns), open flames, hot objects and explosions. The most important priority with thermal burns is controlling and stopping the burning process. Thermal burns can be prevented by wearing Personal Protective Equipment, using fire prevention tactics, and by having procedures and emergency action plans related to fire detection and protection.

Chemical Burns — Chemical burns are the result of skin or eyes coming into contact with strong acids, alkaloids or other corrosive or caustic materials that eat away or "burn" skin and deeper tissue. These accidents can occur after exposure to industrial cleaners. One of the best ways to prevent chemical burns is to make sure all workers are well-versed in Hazard Communication, which covers the symbols and labels that will communicate chemical risk.

Electrical Burns — Current travels through body and meets resistance in tissue, resulting in heat burn injuries. To avoid burns from electrical sources, high-voltage areas and machinery should be clearly marked. Workers should also make sure to identify live wires, avoid contact with water while working with electricity, and wear the personal protective equipment necessary to avoid burns by electricity.

For Any Burn

If you or a co-worker experiences any type of burn, immediately take the following steps to minimize the extent of the injury:

- Put out any flames and remove any restrictive jewelry or clothing.
- Check that the victim's airway is open, that the person is breathing and that there are signs of circulation.
- Do not use ice on the burn, as it could cause even more damage.
- Do not apply butter, burn gels, creams or lotions, as they can prevent proper healing.
- Do not break blisters, as they make the victim susceptible to infection.
- If the person has slipped, tripped or fallen, consider that there may be injuries in addition to the burn. To avoid worsening these other injuries, do not move the person excessively.

Minor Burns

If you or a co-worker suffers a minor burn, which is a first- or second-degree burn that covers only a small part of the body, take the following steps:

- Remove clothing from the affected area.
- Hold the burned area under cool running water for at least five minutes or until pain subsides. Alternatively, submerge the area in cool water. Cooling the area reduces swelling.
- Loosely wrap the burn with a dry, sterile gauze bandage to protect and keep air off the burned skin. Do not tighten the bandage—you should avoid putting pressure on burned skin.
- If the victim experiences increased pain, redness or fever, which could signal an infection, contact a physician immediately.

Major Burns

If you, or a co-worker, experiences second- or third-degree burns over large surfaces of the body or face, hands, feet or the genital area, immediately take the following steps:

- Call 911. If burns cover an area the size of an arm or leg, keep the victim lying down.
- Don't immerse large, severe burns in cold water, as it could trigger shock.
- Stay with the victim and watch carefully for signs of difficulty breathing.
- Don't allow the victim to drink anything.
- Elevate the burned area, raising it above heart level if possible.
- Cover the victim with a clean sheet or blanket for warmth.

The most important thing is to be aware of potential burn and scald hazards at all times. Always wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and know where emergency contact information is posted.

Name	Signature	Name	Signature