



Types of Burns

Thermal - Thermal burns are what most people think of first when burns are mentioned. These burns occur due to contact with a hot surface, fire, hot liquids, or an explosion. Sunburn could be considered a separate type of burn, but we will consider it a thermal burn as well.

Chemical - Chemical burns result from skin or eye contact with a strong acid, corrosive, caustic, or alkaloid. Many of the chemicals used in different processes at many job sites can result in a chemical burn injury. Some common household products can also produce severe chemical burn if not handled correctly.

Electrical burns - Electrical burns occur where an electrical current has passed through the body. When the current travels through the body, the tissue gives it resistance which results in burns. These burns can be both inside and outside of the body. Usually where the burns are on the outside of the body will tell where the electrical current entered and exited the body.

Burn Prevention

Thermal - The best way to reduce your chances of suffering from a thermal burn is to eliminate the source of the heat if possible. If there are pipes or other objects that heat up to dangerous temperatures, then it is important to place guards or barriers on them to protect individuals from being burned. The last line of defense would be to use proper PPE that will protect you from being burned from a hot object or material.

Chemical - Eliminate the use of dangerous chemicals whenever possible. Substitute a chemical that burns the skin quickly with one that does not burn as easily. Block areas or processes that have the chance to expose individuals to hazardous chemicals. Have emergency showers or eye wash stations available for immediate use if exposed to a chemical.

Electrical - Safe work practices are needed to work safely around electricity. Locate and stay away from both underground and overhead power lines. Inspect all tools for defects in insulation as well as missing ground prongs. Properly repair or discard any compromised cords. Do not operate electrical tools in moist or wet environments. Always properly lock and tag out equipment before performing your work on them. Try to turn equipment on to ensure no power is still being given to it. The last line of defense is to wear PPE that protects you from electrical current.

Summary

Know the sources of burns both at work and at home. Eliminate as many sources as possible before turning to engineering controls or PPE to protect yourself from these hazards.

Discussion point:

1. What burn hazards do we face here?

