

Burn Awareness in the Workplace

Introduction:

More than 500,000 people receive medical treatment for burn injuries each year, with over 40,000 hospitalizations and more than 4,000 losing their life. Most burn accidents occur in the home setting, with many occurring in the kitchen or garage. However, there is still a great risk of burn injuries occurring in the workplace. Many hazards exist, including hot machine components, chemicals, hot steam pipes, electrical arc flashes, and many other hazards resulting in fire or explosions.

Discussion Points:

- Burn awareness in the workplace
- Identify hazards resulting in burn injuries
- Types of burns
- Severity of burns
- Training and regular updates to stay current with standards and important concepts



Discussion:

There are three common types of burn injuries in the workplace; thermal, chemical, and electrical. Thermal burns are caused by exposure to hot liquids with the temperature above 115 degrees Fahrenheit, hot surfaces, flames, flashes, and hot steam; Chemical burns occur from coming in contact with corrosive or caustic materials, often causing damage to eyes or skin; Electrical burns occur when working with electrical sources and coming in contact with high-voltage powerlines or live wires.

Employers should make sure employees have proper training before performing any job task. Training should cover the types and severity of burns, an overview of OSHA standards, how to identify hazards, and in-depth safety training involving machinery, chemicals, and other hazards specific to their job.

Employees should know what to do if an accident occurs in the workplace resulting in a burn injury; They should be well-versed in Hazard Communications. Accidents can occur from exposure to industrial cleaners or other chemicals and contact with hot surfaces or flames. They should know the location of the eyewash stations, first aid kits, and other safety equipment. They should know what treatment to provide and when to call for medical assistance.

National Burn Awareness Week is observed the first full week in February. This year that will be February 6-12, 2022. During this week, industrial companies and employees have a chance to review potential burn hazards in the work environment, burn awareness, and burn prevention. Employers should regularly update training to keep employees up-to-date with current standards and important concepts that help avoid burn accidents.

As always, stay safe out there!



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