

COMPLIANCE NEWS

When to Call 9-1-1

Trouble breathing

Burns covering more than on body part or large surface area

Suspected burns to the airway. Burns to the nose or mouth may be a sign of this

Burns to the head, neck, hands, feet, or genitals

A full-thickness burn and is younger than 5 years of age, or older than 60 years of age

A burn caused by chemicals, explosions, or electricity

IMPORTANT:

Please refer to your companies' safety manual for specific burn related issues and protocols**

SOFT TISSUE INJURY: BURNS

Burns are a special kind of soft tissue injury. Like other types of soft tissue injuries, burns can damage the top layer of skin, or skin and layers of fat, muscle, and bone underneath. Burns are classified by depth. The deeper the burn the more severe it is. The three classifications of burns are as followed: superficial (referred to as first degree), partial thickness (referred to as second degree), and full thickness (referred to as third degree). Burns can also be classified by their source: heat (thermal), chemical, electrical, and radiation.

Critical burns require immediate medical attention and are potentially life threatening, disfiguring, and disabling. It is often difficult to tell if a burn is critical. Even superficial burns can be critical if they affect a large body area or certain body parts. The severity of a burn cannot be judged by the person's pain level because nerve endings may have been destroyed.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Signals of burns depend on whether the burn is superficial, partial thickness or full thickness.

Superficial Burns

- Involve only the top layer of skin
- Cause skin to become red and dry, usually painful and the area may swell
- Usually heals within a week without permanent scarring

Partial Thickness Burns

- Involve the top layers of skin
- Cause skin to become red; usually painful; have blisters that may open and weep clear fluid, making the skin appear wet; may appear mottled; and often swells
- Usually heals in 3-4 weeks and may scar

Full Thickness Burns

- May destroy all layers of the skin and some or all of the underlying structures - fat, muscle, bones, and nerves
- The skin may be brown or black (charred), with the tissue underneath sometimes appearing white, and can either be extremely painful or relatively painless (if the burn destroys nerve endings)
- Healing may require medical assistance; scarring is likely