



## Scald Injuries are Preventable — Be Burn Aware

The Prince William County Department of Fire & Rescue System has joined forces with the American Burn Association and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in observance of National Burn Awareness Week, February 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme is "scald", a public safety campaign providing information relating to scald burns in an effort to eliminate and/or reduce burn injuries.

Burn injuries occur every 65 seconds with the majority of incidents occurring at home. According to the American Burn Association, an estimated 486,000 burn injuries, requiring medical treatment, occur each year in the U.S. Since 2007, burn center admissions, due to scald burns, has continued to increase annually.

Scald injuries are painful requiring prolonged treatment and may result in lifelong scarring and even death. Although anyone can sustain a scald burn, infants, young children, older adults and people with disabilities are at high risk for these types of injuries. Such high-risk groups are more likely to require hospitalization, suffer complications and experience a difficult recovery due to physical and psychological pain. Through simple changes in behavior and the home environment, the vast majority of these types of injuries are preventable.

Tips to Stay Safe:

### Water Heater/Tap Water

- Set your water heater at 120 degrees F/48 degrees C or just below the medium setting.
- Use a thermometer to test the water coming out of your bath water tap.
- Run your hand through bath water to test for hot spots.

### Food & Cooking

- Use back burners and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so children cannot pull them down.
- Use oven mitts when cooking or handling hot food and drinks.
- Stir and test food cooked in the microwave before serving. Open heated containers away from you from back to front.
- Keep children away from the stove when cooking by using a safety gate for younger children and marking with tape a 3-foot "no-kid zone" for older children.
- Keep hot drinks away from the edge of tables and counters and avoid using tablecloths and placemats.
- Use a "travel mug" with a tight-fitting lid for all hot drinks.
- Never hold or carry a child while you have a hot drink in your hand.

### Electrical

- Place covers on all electrical outlets.

- Unplug all electrical items within a child’s reach.
- Teach your children to never touch electrical outlets or play with electrical cords.
- Do not allow toys that must be plugged into an outlet.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Do not use extension cords to plug in appliances.
- Use certified surge protectors and power strips.
- Use correct wattage light bulbs.

Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen states, “Scalds are just one of several burning issues in which health and safety officials have joined forces as advocates for public education in the prevention of burn injuries. Help us, help you, by being “Burn Aware.”

For more information on burn awareness and preventing scald burns, visit the American Burn Association [www.ameriburn.org](http://www.ameriburn.org), Safe Kids USA [www.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_risks/burns-and-scalds](http://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/burns-and-scalds) and Shriners Hospital for Children <https://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/shc/beburnaware>.

