

Preventing Scalds & Burns in Dietary Operations

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Steps to take to protect yourself and co-workers

Scald burns, caused by hot liquid or steam, are one of the most common causes of injury in restaurants. A scald burn can be a serious, life-altering injury, causing intense pain, scarring and time away from work. While hot oil heats to higher temperatures and causes more severe injuries, scalds from water are also very frequent in the restaurant industry and can cause third-degree burns almost instantaneously if the water is boiling or simmering. Working with or around hot liquids and steam in a restaurant puts you at risk.

How Can I Prevent Burns?

Good communication between co-workers as well as understanding and following all workplace safety procedures are essential in preventing burn injuries. To reduce your risk of suffering a scald burn injury or causing a co-worker to be burned, take the following precautions.

- When you are manually transferring hot liquids, make sure the container is no more than half-full, and use a lid or splash guard.
- When using a rolling cart to transfer hot liquids, be sure to check the container is secure on the cart so it will not tip or fall from sudden stops or jarring.
- Use extreme care when handling foods or liquids that have been microwaved, as they can reach temperatures greater than boiling without bubbling.
- Keep floors clear of liquids and debris. Slips, trips and falls are responsible for many restaurant scald burns, and often these injuries can result in more time lost at work than other scald injuries.
- When appropriate, use hot pads, potholders or proper gloves/mittens.
- Always wear protective shoes with slip-resistant soles—never open-toed shoes, sandals or boots.
- Follow all safety procedures when working with deep fryers.

What to Do

In the case of a severe burn, as with any serious injury, call 911 immediately, and notify a supervisor. While you wait for the emergency unit, take the following steps:

- Do not immerse large, severe burns in cold water, as it could cause shock.

Editor's Note:

The KING Safety Matters newsletter is published monthly to provide general safety information. It is not a substitute for adequate safety training, or intended to provide complete safety information or training, on any specific subject. The information contained herein is intended to assist safety efforts, and increase safety awareness.

In order to ensure the contents of the newsletter are helpful and important to you, please feel free to send comments, suggestions and feedback to:

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- Do not drink anything.
- Elevate burned body part or parts above heart level, if possible.
- Cover with a clean sheet or blanket.

Resources: OSHA, Cal/OSHA and Toolbox Talks

