Burn Awareness

Two common types of burns that can happen in the laboratory are thermal and chemical burns. Thermal burns occur due to contact with a hot surface, fire, hot liquids, or an explosion. Chemical burns involve skin or eye contact with strong acids, corrosive, caustic, or alkaloid chemicals.

Level of Burn Severity

First Degree – These burns are considered the least serious out of the three levels of severity. They affect the outside layer of the skin (epidermis). The burn site will appear red, painful, dry, and no blisters. A mild sunburn is an example of a first-degree burn. Usually there are no long-term effects to the skin or body.

Second Degree – These burns involve the epidermis and part of the dermis layer of the skin. The burn appears red, blistered, and may be swollen and painful.

Third Degree – The most serious type of burn, these burns destroy the epidermis and dermis and may go into the subcutaneous tissue. The burn site may appear white or charred.

First Aid

First Degree – Most can be treated with over-the-counter ointments or medicines. See a doctor if there is a large area of skin affected, on a major joint, or face.

Second Degree – Run the affected area under cool water for 15 minutes. Over-the-counter ointments and medications can be used. Seek medical attention if the burn affects a large area, hands, face, feet, groin area, or buttocks.

Third Degree – Seek immediate medical attention. If possible, raise the affected area above the heart and get transported to a hospital. Do not remove clothing as this can pull the burned skin.

DO NOT apply ice to a burn because it deepens the injury.