

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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National Burn Awareness Week – February 5 – 11, 2012 It Doesn't Take a Fire to Burn a Child

Sacramento – Across California thousands of people are burned every year in fires and countless lives are lost, including young children. During the week of February 5 – 11, 2012, CAL FIRE is teaming up with fire departments across the country to highlight the fire risks and burn injury prevention during the winter months for National Burn Awareness Week. This year fire officials are focusing on the increased risk to children for burn injuries and offer safety tips to keep them protected from burn injuries.

Each year approximately 465 children ages 14 and under die due to unintentional fires or from burn related injuries, with children ages 3 and younger at the greatest risk, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A 2009 report from the American Burn Association indicates that the most common cause of hospitalizations to children under 5 years of ages is scald burns caused from hot liquids. Hot tap water accounts for nearly 1 in 4 of all scald burns among children and is associated with more deaths and hospitalizations than any other hot liquid burns.

“These types of injuries are preventable and CAL FIRE and fire officials are determined to promote fire safe behaviors and decrease the number of burn injuries,” said Tonya Hoover, State Fire Marshal. “I hope parents use this week to talk with their children about fire and burn prevention at home as well as continue to keep children safe from burn injuries,”

CAL FIRE reminds parents of these simple safety measures for protecting loved ones from burns:

- **Reduce water temperature.** Set your hot water heater to 120 degrees. Consider putting anti-scald devices (about \$40) on each faucet and showerhead. Check the bath water with your wrist or elbow before placing your child in the tub.
- **Prevent spills.** If possible, cook with pots and pans on back burners and turn handles away from the front where a child could grab them. Avoid wearing long sleeves or baggy clothes in the kitchen. Don't place containers of hot food or liquid near the edge of a counter or table and remove tablecloths so a child cannot pull containers onto themselves.
- **Establish a “kid-free zone.”** Make the stove area a “kid-free zone” (3 feet is a good distance). Mark it on the floor with bright tape and tell the kids they are not allowed in that area. Never leave your child alone in the kitchen. Don't hold children while cooking or while carrying hot foods and beverages.
- **Test food and drink temperatures.** Taste cooked foods and heated liquids to make sure they're not too hot for children. Never microwave a baby's bottle. Instead, heat bottles with warm water and test them before feeding your child.
- **Keep electrical cords out of reach** – especially extension cords and cords connected to heating appliances such as coffee pots and deep fryers. Make sure electrical cords can't be pulled or snagged into a bathtub or sink. Don't leave a hot iron sitting on an ironing board unattended.

For more information, visit the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov.

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