

How to protect against scalding

Each year, according to the Burn Prevention Foundation, over 100,000 people—many of them children under five years old—are treated in hospitals and emergency rooms for scald burns. These injuries can cause terrible suffering, often leaving lifelong scars.

The most serious scald burns occur in the bathtub; the greatest number happen in the kitchen. The only good part: Most scald burns can be prevented by parents who think ahead.

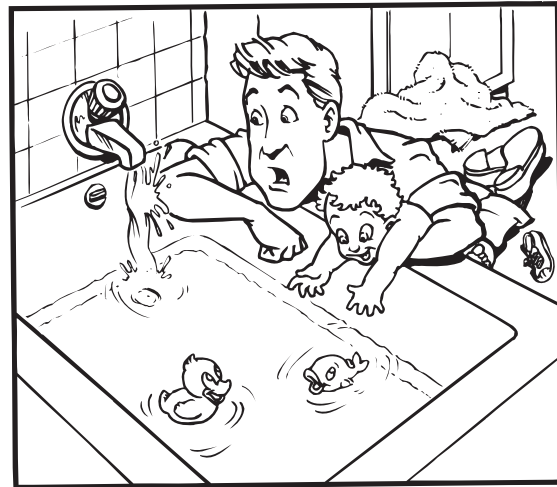
Turn your water heater down

Do you realize how fast hot water can scald young skin and cause permanent scarring? At 155°, it takes just one second. At 140°-five seconds. At 130°-30 seconds.

Recommendation: Set your water heater thermostat at 120° or lower. You'll save on your electric or gas bill, but, more importantly, you may save your child from a tragic scalding.

Test the tub water

Remember: A child's skin is much more delicate than yours. Test bath water with your elbow. If it feels hot to you, it's certainly too hot for your child. Add cold water to lower the bath's temperature.



And never leave a child alone in the tub. It's amazing how quickly little hands can turn faucets—a bad burn can happen in a second. Far better to let that telephone ring. Or, if you must leave the room, take your child with you.

Keep pans out of reach

Hundreds of children are scalded in the kitchen each year because hot liquids and foods are left within reach of small hands.

Whenever something's cooking, keep kids away. Old advice but still important: Place pans on back burners with handles toward the rear. Hot foods belong at the back of the counter or away from the table's edge.

Microwaves can scald, too

Often, children are scalded when removing food or liquids from a microwave oven. The container isn't hot—the contents are. So, watch out for hot fillings!

Fireplace safety

That heat feels great on a winter night, but keep that screen in place. Use wadded newspaper and kindling—never liquid accelerants—to start your fire. Make sure the embers are out before going to bed. Have your chimney cleaned every time you've burned three cords of wood. Otherwise, be cozy and enjoy.

TV fires vs. real fires

Your children have seen fires on television (and perhaps in the movies). Most of these fires show slow-moving flames with large, puffy clouds of smoke. Real fires, as you well know, are far different. Make sure your kids realize:

Real fires are lightning fast

In just a few minutes, your entire house could go up in flames.

Real fires are extremely hot

Temperatures can be higher than 600°.

Real fires are very dark

You won't be able to breathe or see more than a few feet in front of you.

Real fires cause real suffering

Each year, about 1,200 children are killed and thousands more injured in home fires. Unlike TV dramas that end in half an hour, the aftermath of a real fire can last a lifetime.

SHIELDING YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST FIRE AND BURNS



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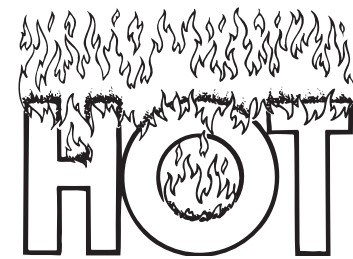
A million dollars' worth of advice ...

You've probably said it: "I wouldn't part with my kids for a million dollars."

Of course, you wouldn't.

So, would you take five minutes right now to review practical suggestions on how to protect your children against fire and burns? Of course, you would.

The more we all know about the dangers of fire—and the more we remind our children about them—the safer all our priceless children will be.



From the moment a toddler leans the meaning of "hot"—and learns to avoid hot stoves, pans,

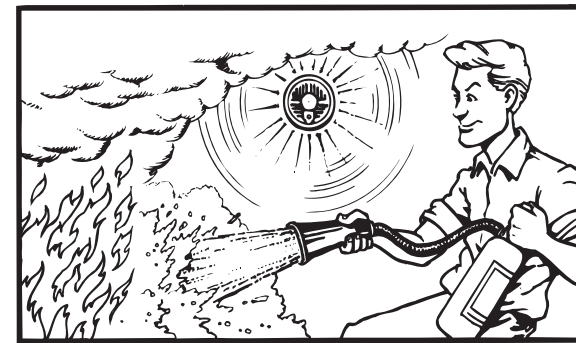
ovens, fireplaces and tap water—your child's fire safety education has begun. Your familiar warnings can't be repeated too often.

What follows is some time-honored advice on what parents can and should do to protect their children. Older children should be taught how to prevent fires. Younger children should be taught how to avoid and escape fires. Children of all ages should know what to do—instinctively—if a fire ever threatens them

First install smoke detectors

Nothing that costs so little saves so many lives. At a minimum, guard your family with smoke detectors at the foot and head of your main stairs. Ideally, every bedroom should have its own smoke detector. So should kitchens, basements, tool shops and garages.

A working smoke detector usually gives your family at least three minutes to get out of your house. A non-working detector is worse than none and could cost you the lives of your loved ones. To make certain your smoke detectors are working, test them every month. If they depend on batteries, replace the batteries every year (perhaps when you change your clocks in October).



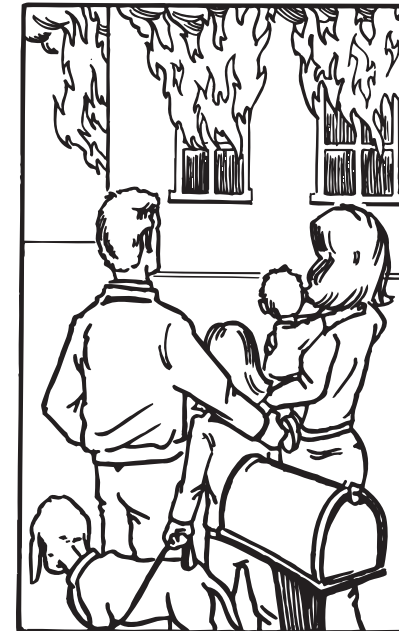
Next, fire extinguishes

After smoke detectors, fire extinguishes are your family's next line of defense. Like smoke detectors, only working extinguishes will help you. Buy extinguishes that are "listed" or "rated" by an independent testing laboratory. Place extinguishes where they're easy to grab in an emergency and check regularly to see that they're fully charged. The best type for homeowners is what's called an ABECextinguisher, filled

with multipurpose dry chemical that smothers most household fires—including grease and electrical.

Plan your family's escape

Every family member from two to 102 should know what to do if a fire breaks out. All rooms—particularly bedrooms—should have two escape routes. Provide retractable escape ladders that can be used to evacuate upper floors. Hold a family fire drill every year. And hold a drill after dark, since most fires occur at night.



"Everybody meet outside"

Before you have an emergency, designate a spot away from the house for all family members to meet to count heads. Decide now which neighbor's house to call the fire company from. No nearby neighbors? Perhaps you can use a car phone. Once outside, stay outside—no adult or child should ever re-enter a burning house to try to save valuables or even to rescue a pet. Never!

Crawl, don't run from a fire

If someone must get out of a burning house, crawling is better than running. Stay low. Crawl under the rising smoke and heat to safety. A wet rag held loosely over the nose may help breathing.

STOP, DROP and ROLL

Your children probably have heard it at school, but tell them again: STOP, DROP and ROLL if clothing catches fire. Running only fans flames—rolling on the floor or ground snuffs out flames.



If you smoke

The number one cause of deaths from fires is smoking—by adults, not kids. Most fires occur when a smoker falls asleep and drops a cigarette on furniture or a mattress. So be extra-extra careful. Another plea: Hide matches and lighters where curious little people can't get them. Better yet, use a locked drawer.