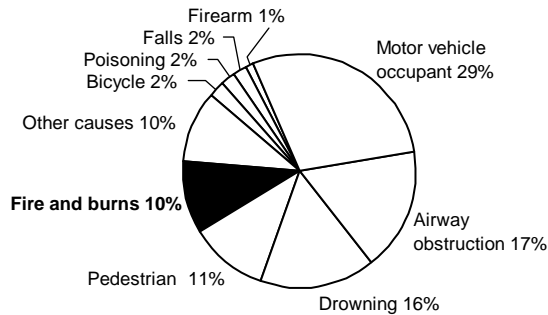




FACTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD BURNS

Leading Causes of Accidental Injury-Related Death for Children 14 and Under 2004



Burns are among the most painful and devastating injuries a person can sustain and survive. Young children are at especially high risk for burns. Because they have thinner skin than older children and adults, their skin burns at lower temperatures and more deeply. Young children also may not perceive danger as readily, may have less control over their environment, may lack the ability to escape a life-threatening burn situation and may not be able to tolerate the physical stress of a burn injury.

- In 2002, 520 children ages 14 and under died due to accidental fire- and burn-related injury. It is estimated that flames and burns are responsible for one-fourth of all fire-related deaths. The fire and burn injury death rate among children ages 14 and under declined 64 percent from 1987 to 2002.
- In 2003, an estimated 83,300 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for burn-related injuries. Of these injuries, approximately 52,200 were thermal burns, 21,000 were scald burns, 6,100 were chemical burns and 1,400 were electrical burns.
- Children ages 4 and under are at the greatest risk, with a burn injury death rate more than two times that of children ages 5 to 14.
- Children with disabilities are also at high risk of burn-related death and injury. These children are especially at risk from scald and contact burns.
- Total charges for pediatric admissions to burn centers average \$22,700 per case.

Scald burn injury (caused by hot liquids or steam) is the most common type of burn-related injury among young children, while flame burns (caused by direct contact with fire) are more prevalent among older children.

- An average of eight children ages 14 and under die from scald burn-related injuries each year. Children ages 4 and under account for nearly all of these deaths.
- Among children ages 4 and under hospitalized for burn-related injuries, it is estimated that 65 percent are treated for scald burns.

- The total annual cost of scald burn-related deaths and injuries among children ages 14 and under is almost \$44 million. Children ages 4 and under account for more than 90 percent of these costs.
- More than 75 percent of all scald burn-related injuries among children ages 2 and under could be prevented through behavioral and environmental modifications, such as lowering the setting on water heaters to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below and by installing anti-scald devices in water faucets and shower heads.

Persons living in homes with smoke alarms typically have a fire-related death rate that is 40 to 50 percent less than the rate for those living in homes without alarms.

- Smoke alarms and sprinkler systems combined could reduce fire-related deaths by 82 percent and injuries by 46 percent.

Fireworks are a common cause of burn injury in the months surrounding the fourth of July.

- In 2003, more than 4,300 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries.
- Children ages 5 to 14 are at the highest risk for fireworks-related injuries. Firecrackers and bottle rockets were the types most associated with injuries to children ages 5 to 14.
- Children ages 4 and under are at the highest risk for sparkler-related injuries.

Numerous safety laws and regulations protect children from burn injury hazards.

- Many states and the District of Columbia have laws that require smoke alarms to be used in both new and existing dwellings. A few states still have no comprehensive smoke alarm laws. Other states have a variety of laws covering specific situations, such as new dwellings or multi-occupancy dwellings only.
- Many communities have enacted local ordinances or building codes that require the installation of anti-scald plumbing devices in all new construction. These laws have been effective in reducing the number of scald burn deaths and injuries associated with hot tap water.
- In 1994, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a mandatory safety standard requiring disposable and novelty cigarette lighters to be child-resistant. Since this standard has been in effect, the number of child-play lighter fires has declined 58 percent.
- The CPSC issued regulations requiring that children's sleepwear must be flame-resistant and self-extinguish if a flame causes it to catch fire. The rules cover all children's sleepwear above size 9 months and up to size 14.