

Safety Theme: Burn Awareness Week: is February 1 – 7, 2009

It is Burn Awareness week, and S.C. State Fire Marshal John Reich is taking this opportunity to educate parents, caregivers, children, educators and others about burn injury prevention.

This year's theme, "Preventing Gasoline Burns" gives Reich, the National Association of State Fire Marshals and other fire professionals an opportunity to join with the Shriners Hospital to educate citizens about preventing gasoline-related burn injuries and deaths.

The following statistics are reported by the Shriners Hospital for Children:

- Each year in the United States, 1.1 million burn injuries require medical attention. Approximately 4,500 people die, and up to 10,000 people die every year in the U.S. from burn-related infections.
- The Shriners Hospitals for Children, specializing in treating burn injuries, have admitted more than 10,000 acute pediatric burn patients since 1994, including those treated for gasoline burn injuries.
- Shriners Hospitals have treated more than 800 children since 2002 for acute burns due to ignition of a highly flammable material such as gasoline.
- Kids ages 13 and older are in the highest at-risk group for gasoline and other flammable substance burns.
- Fires caused by gasoline are a major factor in burn injuries.
- Children ages 10-14 are almost four times more likely to get in trouble with gasoline.

The Shriners Hospital offers the following tips to keep adults and children safe from burns: for Parents

Gasoline Use:

- Use gasoline only to fuel an engine. That is its only use!
- Remember that gasoline vapors can be ignited by a spark, flame or other source of heat that is located many feet away.
- Don't use gasoline anywhere near a barbecue grill.
- Don't use gasoline to light a barbecue grill or to start or accelerate a fire.
- Don't use gasoline as a cleaning fluid or solvent.

Handling Gasoline:

- Handle gasoline in a responsible manner.
- Remember that an engine that is still warm can ignite gasoline vapors. Only add gasoline when an engine is completely cool.

- Don't allow children to touch gasoline or a gasoline container, even under supervision.
- Don't handle gasoline near a flame source, such as matches, lighters and pilot lights on stoves and water heaters.
- Don't use gasoline indoors.
- Don't siphon gasoline by mouth, as it is harmful or fatal if swallowed.
- Don't induce vomiting if gasoline is swallowed. Instead, seek immediate medical attention.

Storing Gasoline:

- Store gasoline only in an approved gasoline container.
- Store gasoline in a well-ventilated outside storage area that is not attached to your home, such as a shed or garage, preferably in a locked cabinet. Be sure there are not any ignition sources nearby.
- Place the gasoline container out of reach of children.
- Keep only the minimum amount of gasoline required (generally, no more than a gallon).
- Don't store gasoline in a glass jar, milk jug or any other non-approved container.
- Don't store gasoline anywhere inside a home or vehicle.
- Don't store gasoline near a source of heat or sparks, such as a hot water heater, furnace, clothes dryer or any appliance that uses a pilot light.

About Gasoline Containers:

- Check gasoline containers for compliance with the ASTM F852 standard, which establishes performance requirements for portable gasoline containers intended for reuse by consumers. This compliance is indicated in writing on either side or the underside of all approved plastic gasoline containers.
- Don't put anything other than gasoline in a gasoline container.
- Don't drink anything out of a gasoline container.

For additional burn awareness tips, go to the Shriners Hospital Web site:

www.shrinershq.org/Hospitals/Burn_Awareness/About/ or
www.burnawarenessweek.org

Since most fire-related fatalities and injuries occur in residential occupancies, State Fire Marshal Reich emphasizes the importance of having working smoke alarms, practicing an emergency escape plan, and installing residential fire sprinkler systems.