Burns/Scalds Information

Burns Sheet – Directions for Use:

- Remove casualty from danger.
- Pour tap water or saline onto fabric side of the sheet.
- Wrap the sheet with wet fabric side to casualty.
- If necessary, fasten around casualty, using tape on the plastic side of the sheet.

Aim:
Stop the burning process, cool the burn (provides pain relief), cover the burn.

Initially:
- Ensure the safety of rescuers, bystanders and the casualties.
- Do not enter a burning or toxic area without appropriate protection.
- Where practical to do so, stop the burning process.
- Remove the casualty to a safe environment.
- Check Airway, Breathing & Other Injuries, particularly at Motor Vehicle Accidents, High Voltage Electrical Incidents, or where Blast or Explosions have occurred.
- Call triple zero (000) and ask for Ambulance. Follow instructions.

General Management

- IMMEDIATELY cool the affected area with running water, if available, for up to 20 minutes. Keep the rest of the casualty warm.
- Remove hot, or contaminated clothing quickly and carefully, but not if it is sticking to a burn. If present, adhered Bitumen pieces should not be removed.
- If possible, remove any constricting items from the affected area without causing further tissue damage.
- Where feasible, elevate burnt limbs to minimise swelling.
- Cover the burnt area with a loose and light lint free Non-Stick Dressing.
- If water is not available, hydrogel products are an alternative to water.

- Do Not peel off adherent clothing or burning substances.
- Do Not use Ice or Ice Water to cool the burn, as further tissue damage may result.
- Do Not break any Blisters.
- Do Not apply creams, lotions, ointments or powders, other than Hydrogel.

- The airway is at risk of obstruction due to swelling of the oropharynx and soft tissues of the neck secondary to burn injury.
Chemical Burns

- Avoid direct contact with any chemicals or contaminated material (use gloves).
- Wash any chemicals off the skin (do not wash over unaffected skin). Brush off powdered chemicals. Remove any contaminated clothing.
- Chemicals continue to destroy tissue as long as they are in contact with the skin.
- IMMEDIATELY cool the affected area with running water, if available, for at least 20 minutes. Keep the rest of the casualty warm.
- If available, refer to the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for specific treatment, or refer to the instructions on the contaminating container.
- Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 for further advice.
- If chemicals enter the eye, open and flush the eye(s) thoroughly with water for at least 20 minutes and refer the casualty for urgent medical attention. Ensure the unaffected eye is uppermost when irrigating, to avoid contamination.
- Do Not attempt to neutralise Acid or Alkaline burns because this will increase heat generation which may cause more damage.

Phosphorus Burns – use Saline soaked dressings to prevent re-ignition of the phosphorus by contact with the air.

Hydrofluoric Acid – commonly used by Jewellers. Copious irrigation with water is needed. If available, it is critical to apply Calcium Gluconate Gel immediately.

Notes:

- This leaflet is a guide to basic first aid procedures. It outlines typical rather than definitive procedures. It does not include all potential types of burn injuries that may occur.
- Responders to casualties should be trained in first aid.
- Treatments may vary with time and it is important to review first aid procedures.
- Professional medical advice should be sought as soon as possible.
- Information correct at the time of issue (January 2012).

* Following is a link to the Victorian Burns Unit’s Clinical Practice Guidelines which provides additional information on Burns: