



NEWS RELEASE

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CAUTION AND CARE PREVENTS SCALDS AND BURNS

It can happen in an instant and even the tiniest touch can cause pain and damage.

“We have all done it: being burned or scalded is an awful feeling, and in some cases, it can lead to serious injury,” said Krista Barton, Fire and Life Safety Educator with the Township of Langley Fire Department. “But taking a few precautions while going about our daily tasks can greatly reduce the chances of being scalded, and exercising care in the kitchen can help avoid burns while cooking.”

“The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking,” said Barton, who advises cooks to stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food. Check food regularly when simmering, baking, or roasting, and use a timer as a reminder that you are cooking.

“Always cook with caution,” said Barton. “Be on alert, and if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, do not use the oven or stovetop.”

As well, anything that can catch fire – oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains – must be kept away from the stovetop.

If a fire does start while cooking on the stove, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.

In the kitchen, place hot liquid and food in the center of a table or towards the back of a counter. Ensure there is a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried. Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking hot liquid, or carrying hot food or liquid.

When using the microwave, allow food to cool before eating. Always open microwaved food slowly, away from the face.

Never heat a baby bottle in the microwave oven; use warm water from the faucet instead.

“Prepackaged microwavable soups are a frequent cause of scald burn injuries - especially noodle soups - because they can easily tip over, pouring hot liquid and noodles on the person,” Barton said. To avoid the possibility of a spill, choose prepacked soups with containers that have a wide base, or carefully pour the soup into a traditional bowl after heating.

For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

“If you have any doubt, just get out,” Barton said. “When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire and call 9-1-1 from outside the home.”

Scalds are burn injuries that are caused by hot liquids and steam. While a scalding can happen at any age, Barton said, children, older adults, and people with disabilities are especially at risk.

“Hot liquids from bath water, hot coffee, and even microwaved soup can cause devastating injuries,” she said, noting that scald burns are the second leading cause of all burn injuries.

To avoid scalding in the bathroom, check the water at the faucets. It should be less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 28 degrees Celsius. Anti-scald devices can be installed on tub faucets and shower heads.

Test the water before placing a child in the bath or getting in the bath yourself by moving your hand, wrist and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm, not hot, to the touch.

Always supervise a child in or near a bathtub and teach children that hot things can burn.

If you do get burned, treat it right away, Barton said. Cool the burn with cool water for three to five minutes and get medical help if needed.

For more information, contact Public Fire and Life Safety Educator Krista Barton at kbarton@tol.ca or 604.533.6090 ext. 3320.