

Township of  
**Langley**



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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **WEEK HELPS PREVENT BURNS AND SCALDING**

We all know the feeling: the searing pain that comes the instant your fingers touch a too hot pan or scalding coffee meets the roof of your mouth. Imagine if that blistering pain and damage occurred to a larger portion of your body.

It can happen in an instant and the result can be devastating, which is why the Township of Langley Fire Department is offering advice to prevent burns and scalds during Burn Awareness Week, January 29 to February 4.

Much of that advice centres around cooking. While the kitchen is the heart of the home, it is also the place where the most caution is needed, as it is where fires, burns, and scalds are most likely to happen.

“Taking a few precautions while performing our daily tasks can greatly reduce the chances of being scalded, and exercising care in the kitchen can help avoid burns while cooking,” said Township Public Fire and Life Safety Educator Krista Barton.

The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Cooks are advised to stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food, and to check food regularly when simmering, baking, or roasting. 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.

To prevent little ones – and grown-ups – from getting hurt, always place hot liquid and food in the centre 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.

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.

“Pre-packaged 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.

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 a burn does occur, treat it right away by cooling the skin with cool, not cold, water for five to 10 minutes. Cool water reduces skin damage and minimizes pain. Never use butter, toothpaste, lotions, ointments, or ice to treat a burn, as they only seal the heat in.

During Burn Awareness Week, Barton and other Township Public Life Safety Educators will be going into local kindergarten to Grade 7 classes to teach the Burn Awareness Week program. Educational, fun, and interactive, the program includes a popular colouring contest and age-appropriate safety lessons.

“Burn Awareness Week teaches kids how to be responsible for their personal safety, and increases family awareness of potentially harmful situations,” Barton said. “While the Week and its accompanying activities are geared towards children, people of all ages can benefit from the information being shared.”

“Anyone can access the program, which includes safety tip information, activity sheets, quizzes, colouring pages, and animated videos,” said Barton, who encourages residents to share the information with family, friends, and co-workers. The program is available to download and print at [burnfund.org](http://burnfund.org).

*For more information, contact Public Fire and Life Safety Educator Krista Barton at [kbarton@tol.ca](mailto:kbarton@tol.ca) or 604.533.6090 ext. 3320.*