

# CHEMICAL BURNS



## Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

From 1988-2006, 1,292 persons were hospitalized in a burn center and 146 died a result of a work-related burn injury. One hundred twelve (9%) of these injuries (including 2 deaths) were the result of a chemical burn. Chemical burns can be severe and result in a high number of lost workdays. Although more than two-thirds of the chemical burns involved less than 10% of the body surface area, one person was hospitalized 61 days with burns to 50% of their body.

- A 35-year-old worker was sprayed with nitric acid from a ruptured hose. He did make it to a safety shower, but did not remove his shirt immediately. He suffered burns to 10% of his body and was hospitalized five days.
- A 29-year-old male who was self-employed sustained burns to both his ankles from dry concrete that fell down his boots while he was working. The concrete remained in his boots for several hours. He was hospitalized five days.
- A 33-year-old male fell into an alkaline cleaner (140 degrees) for approximately 10 seconds when the grate he was standing on at work broke.
- A 33-year-old male working as a general laborer died after a piece of equipment

disconnected and sprayed pressurized liquid propane/butane for about 3-5 minutes. The propane/butane was extremely cold and sprayed him until his foot could be freed.

- A 20-year-old male and a 48-year-old male sustained sulfuric acid burns after it exploded out of an oil well.
- A 30-year-old male was cleaning air conditioner coils with hydrofluoric acid when he dropped the container, causing it to splash on him.
- A 60-year old female was stripping floors at work when her knees began to burn from the chemical. She was hospitalized 10 days.
- A 23-year-old male slipped and fell into a puddle of paint stripping solution mixed with old paint. He went home and took a shower and then realized that he had been burned.

### Contact Information

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## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide appropriate training to employees working with potentially hazardous materials.
- Ensure that employees wear proper personal protective equipment (e.g., goggles, gloves, clothing).
- Remove contaminated clothing and promptly irrigate chemical burns that occur.
- Properly maintain equipment containing chemical substances.
- Keep floors clean, dry, and free of clutter.
- Properly store all chemical agents.
- Consult the *NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards* for specific exposures.

The Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program collects statewide information on 19 occupational health conditions in order to develop and inform occupational injury and illness prevention programs. Oklahoma's occupational surveillance system is a research program of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

For detailed reports, please go to the  
Occupational Injuries section at:  
<http://ips.health.ok.gov>