

# MINOR BURNS

*The information provided in this safety topic is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or formal first aid training.*

If you have burned yourself at work or you are offering first aid to a co-worker that has experienced a burn, attempt to determine whether it is a major or a minor burn.

- A **minor burn**, that doesn't require emergency medical attention, is limited to an area no larger than 3 inches in diameter and may involve some pain, swelling, blisters or superficial redness, similar to a sunburn.
- For **major burns** that are deep, larger than 3 inches in diameter or cover the hands, feet, face, groin, buttocks or a major joint, call 911 (or emergency services) or seek immediate medical care.
- Minor burns can be treated with basic first aid, but major burns require emergency medical care.



A minor burn is limited to an area no larger than 3 inches in diameter. There may be redness, swelling blisters and some pain. To treat a minor burn that doesn't require emergency care:

1. **Cool the burn.** Hold the burned area under cool (not cold) running water or apply a cool, wet compress until the pain eases.
2. **Remove tight items.** Take off jewelry, including rings, or any other tight items that are on or near the burned area. Try to do this quickly and gently, before the area swells.
3. **Don't break blisters.** Fluid-filled blisters protect against infection. If a blister breaks, clean the area with water (mild soap is optional). Apply an antibiotic ointment. But if a rash appears, stop using the ointment.
4. **Apply burn ointment** or spray, if available in the first aid kit.
5. **Bandage the burn.** Cover the burn with a sterile gauze bandage (not fluffy cotton). Wrap it loosely to avoid putting pressure on burned skin. Bandaging keeps air off the area, reduces pain and protects blistered skin.

## Discussion

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***Provide some examples or descriptions of what could be considered a minor burn.***

***What could cause a minor burn at work and how could each example given be prevented?***