

Don't Feel the Burn: This is National Burn Awareness Week

In recognition of 2019 National Burn Awareness Week, which runs Feb. 3-9, Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Mike Causey reminds residents of the causes of burn injuries and the resources of burn care available. Most "fire-related injuries" are burns. In fact, approximately every 60 seconds, someone in the U.S. sustains a burn injury serious enough to require treatment, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

"We've all suffered minor burns from either grabbing a hot pan or spilling steaming coffee – and that's painful – but imagine surviving a large second, third or fourth degree burn," said State Fire Marshal Mike Causey. "This type of injury is so severe you are left with physical and emotional trauma. That's why this week is so important to bring awareness to the different causes of burn injuries and provide resources to help keep our residents safe."

State Fire Marshal Causey is kicking off National Burn Awareness Week by touring the state to bring awareness to the seriousness of burns that can even result in death. On Wednesday, Feb. 6, he will tour the UNC Jaycee Burn Center in Chapel Hill and host a live fire demonstration for the media to show the dangers of how easily a person on oxygen can catch on fire. That demonstration and press conference will take place at 1 p.m.

This event is part of OSFM's yearlong educational campaign aimed at burn awareness and prevention that includes offering free educational materials via the OSFM website, www.ncdoi.com/osfm.

According to the American Burn Association, burn injuries continue to be one of the leading causes of accidental death and injury in the United States with approximately 486,000 people receiving treatment of burn injuries annually. Almost one-third of all burn injuries occur in children under the age of 15.

The focus of National Burn Awareness week is on preventing burn injuries in the home. The majority of preventable burn injuries that occur in residences including scalds, fire-related injuries and electrical burns. To prevent burns from fires and scalding, State Fire Marshal Causey offers these important safety tips:

- **Be "alarmed"** Install and maintain smoke alarms in your home - on every floor and near all rooms that family members sleep in. Test your smoke alarms once a month to make sure they are working properly. Use long life batteries when possible.
- **Have an escape plan** Create and practice a family fire escape plan and involve kids in the planning. Make sure everyone knows at least two ways out of every room and identify a central meeting place outside.

- **Cook with care** Use safe cooking practices, such as never leaving food on the stove unattended. Also, supervise or restrict children's use of stoves, ovens and microwaves.

- **Check water heater temperature** Set your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Infants and small children may not be able to get away from water that may be too hot. Maintaining a constant thermostat setting can help control the water temperature throughout your home. Test the water at the tap if possible.

For more information and safety tips, visit the fire and burn prevention section of the Safe Kids North Carolina website (at www.ncdoi.com/osfm) or contact Safe Kids North Carolina Director Shannon Bullock at Shannon.Bullock@ncdoi.gov.

Here are some tips for fire and burn prevention for parents and caregivers: Did you know...
 • Fires and burns are the #5 cause of injury-related death to children in the United States?
 • Over 300 children are treated in emergency rooms for burn-related injuries each day and 2 children die as a result of being burned?

- 47% of children who died from fires or burns were aged 4 and under?

Use these safety tips to help protect yourself and others from fire and burns:

- Cook with caution: never leave flammable items near the stove, turn all handles away from children's reach, and never leave a child in the kitchen alone while you're cooking.
- Keep matches, candles, gasoline, lighters and all other flammable materials locked away and out of children's reach.

- Set your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Consider installing water faucets and shower heads containing anti-scald technology.

- Install and maintain smoke alarms in your home. Make sure to test them once a month.
- Have an escape plan and practice it with your family. Make sure everyone knows at least 2 ways out of every room and choose a central meeting place outside.

- Never smoke in bed and extinguish cigarettes before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended and keep candles away from children, pets, or combustible materials.

Prescribed Burn Season Brings Benefits to Wildlife Habitat

Some people see smoke in the vicinity of N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission game lands and their immediate thoughts go to wildfires. What they're witnessing is actually one of the most beneficial and cost-effective methods of managing habitat for wildlife – a prescribed burn.

The Commission uses prescribed burning, an intentional burning of vegetation, to help restore and maintain wildlife habitat on most of the 2 million acres of state game lands used by hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers throughout the state. Burning encourages production of native grasses and herbaceous vegetation, which provides valuable food and cover for a wide variety of wildlife species. Prescribed burns are also used to help reduce high levels of forest fuels (such as leaf litter and pine straw) that can lead to catastrophic wildfires and to control disease and insects.

The Commission's burn season typically runs January through March. Some burns, however, are conducted into spring and summer, as warm season burning provides for better control of young hardwoods in certain habitats. Optimal conditions for a prescribed burn occur on cool-weather days with the absence of strong wind.

Many of North Carolina's declining or rare wildlife species, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker, are adapted to fire or found only in fire-dependent habitat. Commission staff typically conduct maintenance burns in multi-year cycles to open groundcover for quail, grassland birds, deer and turkeys.

"Some may worry that the animals will be unable to escape from the fires during our burning season," said Chris Jordan, the Commission's lands program coordinator. "The Commission utilizes burning techniques that ensure animals have time and room to escape. Vegetation typically returns within a few weeks, with the animals following shortly after."

Follow the Commission's Twitter page (twitter.com/NCWildlife) for daily information on prescribed burns being conducted across the state.

For more information on prescribed burns, view "No Cause for Alarm: Prescribed Burns Benefit Wildlife and Habitat" on YouTube and visit Prescribed Fire: What NC Citizens Need to Know at www.mcuwildlife.org. For more information on the Commission's game lands program, including an interactive game land map, visit www.ncwildlife.org/gameland.

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