

ATTACH TO

THE PATIENT

BitSafe



Burns Tag

TREATMENT OF BITUMEN BURNS

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF FIRST AID AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL

All persons working with hot bitumen should be familiar with these recommendations in order to administer first aid to burn victims. This tag should accompany the patient and be placed in a prominent position before the patient is transported to a doctor or hospital.

NO ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE TO REMOVE THE BITUMEN FROM THE BURNED AREA AT THE WORKSITE!

■ First Aid

- If hot bitumen contacts the skin, the affected area should be cooled immediately by drenching in cold, preferably running, water for at least five minutes;
- The cooling treatment should be continued until the bitumen has cooled and hardened;
- No attempt should be made to remove the bitumen from the burn victim;
- A Burnshield dressing should be applied as soon as possible;
- For small or not very severe burns, Burnshield Hydrogel should be sprayed over the affected area, which will have the same effect as a Burnshield dressing.

See other side



■ Further treatment and medical care

- The bitumen layer will be firmly attached to the skin, and removal should NOT be attempted except at a medical facility under the supervision of a doctor. The cold bitumen will form a waterproof, sterile layer over the burn which will prevent the burn from drying out. If the bitumen is removed from the wound there is a possibility of complications;
- The bitumen should be left in place and covered with a dressing containing a paraffin-based ointment e.g. Flamazine. Such treatment will have the effect of softening the bitumen, enabling it to be removed over a period of days;
- The dressing should be changed daily or when soiled or dry, at which time any softened bitumen can be gently removed. Petrolatum-based antibiotic ointments or petroleum jelly may be used under medical supervision;
- The degree and extent of burns, and the general condition of the patient will dictate when transfer to a specialised burns unit is indicated.

■ Circumferential burns

Where hot bitumen completely encircles a limb or other body part, the cooled and hardened bitumen may have a tourniquet effect. The bitumen should be softened as described above and the patient referred urgently for specialised medical attention.

■ Eye burns

If hot bitumen enters an eye, it should be flushed with water until the bitumen has cooled. No attempt should be made by unqualified personnel to remove the bitumen. The patient should be referred urgently for specialised medical assessment and treatment.

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