

**San Joaquin County  
Emergency Medical Services Agency**

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**BLS Burns**

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**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.60, 1797.80, 1797.197, 1797.197a, 1797.204, 1797.220, 1798; California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 2, Sections 100062, 100063, 100064

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**INFORMATION NEEDED:**

Type and source of burn: chemical, electrical, steam, smoke, open flame.  
Complicating factors: exposure in enclosed space, total time exposed, drugs, alcohol.  
Medical history: cardiac disease, respiratory disease, medications.  
Associated mechanism of injury: fall through roof, explosion, motor vehicle collision.

**OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:**

Evidence of inhalation injury: smoky sputum, singed nasal hair, hoarseness.  
Depth of burn: full thickness, partial thickness, surface burn.  
Size of burn: calculate total body surface area (TBSA) using rule of nines.  
Entrance and exits wounds from electrical circuit.  
Associated trauma from explosion, fall, etc.

**TREATMENT:****All Patients:**

1. Stop the burning process.
2. Primary Survey – ensure ABC's.
3. Monitor SpO<sub>2</sub>.
4. Patients with respiratory distress: Humidified oxygen 10-15 L/min via non-rebreathing mask or oxygen with nebulized saline via mask.
5. Patients with ineffective respirations: support ventilations with oxygen, BVM and BLS airway.
6. Following specific treatments: Secondary Survey and Routine Medical Care.

**Thermal or Electrical Burns:**

1. Cool with water for up to 5 minutes to stop the burning process. Avoid prolonged cool water usage due to risks of hypothermia and local cold injury.
2. Remove jewelry and non-adhered clothing. Do not break blisters.
3. Dress burn:
  - a. If <20% TBSA cover with sterile dressing soaked with sterile water.
  - b. If >20% TBSA cover with dry sterile burn sheet or cleanest dry sheet.
4. Prior to movement cover stretcher with dry sterile burn sheet or cleanest dry sheet.

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Effective: April 1, 2020  
Supersedes: July 1, 2007

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Approved: Signature on file  
Medical Director

Signature on file  
EMS Administrator

Chemical Burns:

1. Follow appropriate decontamination or hazmat procedures.
2. Brush off dry powders, remove contaminated clothing and irrigate with copious amounts of water.
3. Do not attempt to remove tar or other adhered material.

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