

When is hot water too hot?

The following national statistics document the need for parents and caregivers to take necessary precautions to protect young children, many of whom suffer burn-related injuries each year.

- Children ages 4 and under are at the greatest risk, with an injury death rate of more than two times that of children ages 5 to 14.
- Scald burn injury (caused by **hot** liquids or steam) is the most common type of burn-related injury among young children.
- A child exposed to **hot** tap water at 140 degrees Fahrenheit for three seconds will sustain a third-degree burn, an injury requiring hospitalization and skin grafts.
- Children, especially those ages 4 and under, may not perceive danger, have less control of their environment, may lack the ability to escape a life-threatening burn situation and may not be able to tolerate the physical stress of a burn injury.
- **Hot** tap water accounts for nearly one-fourth of all scald burns among children and is associated with more deaths and hospitalizations than other **hot** liquid burns.
- Tap-water burns most often occur in the bathroom and tend to be more severe and cover a larger portion of the body than other scald burns.



A public service publication from the

NYS Consumer Protection Board

Advocating for and Empowering NY Consumers

1-800-697-1220 • www.nysconsumer.gov

When is hot water too hot?



The Consumer Protection Board (CPB) urges consumers to make sure their children and loved ones are protected from extremely painful and possibly fatal scalding burns. The following tips preventing scalding burns will reduce the likelihood of trauma and medical expenses. Additionally, lowering your

water temperature will reduce energy consumption, thereby saving you money on your utility bill.

- ◆ Set your water temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit/ 48 degrees Celsius or lower.
- ◆ Install anti-scald devices which will stop or interrupt the flow of water when the temperature reaches a certain level.
- ◆ Test the water with your wrist or elbow before you place a child in the bathtub. There are also bathtub thermometers or testers that can be purchased for this purpose.
- ◆ Provide constant adult supervision of young children when they are bathing or showering and do not let them adjust water temperature.
- ◆ Face children away from tub faucets so they cannot grab or turn them.
- ◆ Make sure that all faucets are clearly labeled “**HOT**” or “**COLD**.”
- ◆ Keep the faucet turned in the “**COLD**” position when not using your tub or shower.
- ◆ Do not place **hot** liquids or food within a child’s reach.
- ◆ Do not hold small children while drinking hot beverages or while cooking.
- ◆ Make sure children are a safe distance away from a microwave or stove when removing food or liquid from these appliances.

The CPB acknowledges and thanks the following organizations for their information in the production of this resource:
Safe Kids USA and The American Burn Association.