

Stop, Drop & Roll!

Each year more than 15,000 people are seriously burned when their clothes catch on fire. In more than half of the incidents, flammable liquids or vapors were present on or around the person's clothing. But it can happen in many ways. A person's loose sleeve may catch fire on a hot stove. Someone may be working with gasoline or some other flammable liquid and then light a cigarette. They might spray lighter fluid on a smoldering barbecue fire and the resulting flames could catch their clothes on fire. When a person's clothing catches on fire, action must be instinctive and immediate. There is no time to think.

The one thing you should never do is run.

To minimize a burn injury when your clothes catch fire, **STOP, DROP and ROLL**. Burns are among the most painful of injuries and the third leading cause of unintentional death in the United States. The hands, groin, face and lungs are at particular risk because they are delicate structures and easily injured. The healing process is slow and painful, resulting in enormous personal suffering.

Certain types of clothing are less flammable and resist flames more than other types of clothing. Heavier clothing and fabrics with a tight knit weave burn more slowly compared with loose knit clothing. Fabrics with a loose fit or a fluffy pile will ignite more readily than tight-fitting, dense fabric clothing. Synthetic fibers, such as nylon, once ignited, melt and burn causing severe burns. Natural fibers, such as cotton and wool, tend to burn more slowly than synthetic fibers. However, fibers that combine both synthetic and natural fibers may be of greater hazard than either fabric alone. Curtains and draperies can be sprayed with flame retardants to reduce their rate of burning. However, these chemicals should not be applied to clothing.

The principles of STOP, DROP and ROLL are simple:

- Stop, do not run, if your clothes catch on fire.
- Drop to the floor in a prone position.
- Cover your face with your hands to protect it from the flames.
- Roll over and over to smother the fire. Don't stop until the flames have been extinguished.

If you are near someone whose clothing catches on fire, be sure to stop them from running and make them STOP, DROP and ROLL.

- Once the fire is out, you must treat a burn injury.
- Cool a burn with water.
- Then call 9-1-1.



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