

Rofer Seriously Burned While Lowering a Bucket of Hot Tar

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Burn Injury Narrative
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A commercial roofer in Washington State was seriously burned while working on a Built-Up-Roof. The roofer, who had been working for his employer for over a year was filling buckets of hot tar for a job. He reached for a bucket above his work level and attempted to lower it. He believed that the bucket was empty, but instead it was full of hot tar. As he attempted to lower the bucket, it tipped and spilled hot tar onto his arm.

The victim was treated and released the same day from a regional specialized burn care center. The total surface area of the burns sustained was not very large but they were very deep. The burns required his return to the burn center for skin grafts at which time he was hospitalized for about 4 days. The injured employee was restricted from work for over two months.



Injuries such as these may be prevented by taking the following steps:

- Never allow anyone to be positioned below a source of hot tar.
- If the hot tar must be raised in buckets, use a hoist and line that is adequate for the load. Never allow anyone to stand below a bucket that is being hoisted. Never climb a ladder with a bucket of hot tar.
- Keep the hot tar inside of a bucket at a safe level for hoisting or carrying. Never fill a hot tar bucket more than three-fourths full.
- Ensure workers wear leather or heat-resistant gloves, long pants without cuffs, long sleeved cotton shirts, non-skid shoes and safety glasses with side shields or goggles when working with hot tar.
- Keep a supply or source of cool water available on the roof. Quickly immersing a burn or running cool water over it can reduce the severity of the burn and ease the victim's pain.
- Wait for a medical professional's advice on removing tar from burned skin. If the tar is removed incorrectly, it may make the burn injury more severe.

Please consider the above information as you make safety decisions or recommendations for your company or constituency. The information in this narrative is based on preliminary data only and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the injury.

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