

Apprentice Roofer Slips and Falls into Hot Tar

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Burn Injury Narrative
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An apprentice roofer was in the process of carrying two buckets of hot tar across the roof when he stepped into some freshly applied hot tar and slipped. The slip caused him to fall into the hot tar. He was also splashed by the hot tar in the buckets he was carrying and suffered serious second and third degree burns to his head, face, neck, chest, arms and hands. These burns required over two weeks of hospitalization and numerous surgical procedures.

The victim returned to light duty work a month and a half after the injury and to regular work a week following that.



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

- Whenever possible, use mop carts with wheels and push handles for the transfer of hot tar to the application point. Carefully twist buckets or mop carts to un-stick them from the roof.
- Debris and clutter on the roof can cause trips and falls. Always practice good housekeeping.
- Hot tar is a petroleum by-product and very slick or sticky. Either condition can cause a trip or fall. Plan jobs and use best work practices to the extent possible, to avoid getting hot tar on surfaces where co-workers might walk.
- 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.
- Wear heat resistant gloves with stretch wrist cuffs (no gauntlet style), natural fiber clothing - long sleeve shirts that extend over the cuff of the glove, long pants and high top work boots.
- 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.
- Workers and supervisors should be trained in first aid for tar burns.

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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