



## Scalding Incident – Kettles in Classrooms

A scald injury occurred in a primary school classroom after a kettle, which had been recently boiled was accidentally pulled down from the top of a resource cupboard by a student. The contents of the kettle spilt over the student.

The department does not recommend kettles being in classrooms for personal use. However, if staff request to have a kettle/hot liquids in their classroom, (for tea and coffee making purposes), they must gain approval from the Principal, Head of Department or Officer-in-Charge. Before approval, Principals, Heads of Department and Officers-in-Charge, should ensure a risk management approach is applied which considers the following as minimum controls:

- Kettles or other items containing hot liquids are not located in places where students may be able to reach them or their cords. Remember - hot water can scald up to half an hour after it has been boiled. A freshly poured hot drink will burn a child instantly.
- Kettles or jugs should only be filled with enough water for the immediate task - i.e. if one cup of hot water is required, then only boil one cup. This will ensure the kettle or jug is not left with hot contents.
- Practices should be in place to ensure students never come into contact with kettles/jugs or their contents. Other hot items such as teapots, coffee plungers and mugs of hot liquids must also be kept away from students. Avoid storing hot items on unstable furniture such as the top of fridges or resource cupboards.
- When consuming a hot beverage in the classroom or in the school ground, it is recommended that a "spill-proof" mug with a wide base and a tight fitting lid is used to reduce the risk of spilling and subsequent scalds.
- Any electrical item brought into school from home (including kettles, heaters and fans) must undergo the appropriate risk management strategies as outlined in procedure: *ESM-PR-002: Equipment Management for Schools*.

Consider access to staff rooms that are designed to appropriately accommodate tea and coffee making facilities or encourage the use of a thermos/flask to avoid the need to have kettles in classrooms.

### First aid for burns and scalds - Source: St John Ambulance

1. Follow DRABC
2. Quickly remove wet clothing from the affected area.
3. Hold the burnt area under cold running water until the skin returns to normal temperature  
— do this for at least 10 minutes.
4. Remove jewellery and clothing from burnt area — leave it if stuck.
5. Cover the injury with a non-adherent burns dressing — if you don't have one use aluminium foil, plastic wrap, or a wet clean dressing.
6. Seek medical aid urgently

### When to seek medical aid

Extensive burns are dangerous and may be fatal. You should seek medical aid if:

- The burn is deep, even if the casualty feels no pain.
- A superficial burn is larger than a 20-cent piece.
- The burn involves the airway, face, hands or genitals.
- You are unsure of the severity of the burn.

### Further Information

KidSafe Queensland – Factsheet - Scalds

<http://www.gtp.com.au/kidsafeqld/innewsfiles/inews.8176.1.pdf>

St John Ambulance - Factsheet - first aid in and around the home

[www.stjohnnsw.com.au/mc/fs/fs\\_aidhome.html](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au/mc/fs/fs_aidhome.html)