FIRST AID

Bitumen burns should be cooled for no less than 15 minutes. First, they should be washed with cold water to alleviate pain, next, with warm water to prevent excessive body cooling (hypothermia) if the burn in no larger than hand size. In the event of eye burns, eyes should be rinsed for no less than 5 minutes.

NO BITUMEN REMOVAL FROM BURNS SHOULD BE ATTEMPTED AT THE SCENE OF ACCIDENT!

MEDICAL HELP

In case of doubt regarding appropriate procedures you should immediately contact Centrum Leczenia Oparzeń: http://clo.com.pl/; T: +48 32 229 20 00.

A removal of bitumen layer from skin should be undertaken as soon as possible, under medical supervision or at a hospital. However, the removal procedure should be performed with due care, as irresponsible bitumen removal can cause further skin damage, which may lead to a risk of infection and possible complications.

In the initial stage of medical help, determining whether the burn is superficial or deep is insignificant. Priority should be given to bitumen removal without causing further injuries.

REMOVING BITUMEN ADHERENT TO BURNT SKIN

Various removal methods are recommended:

- Bitumen layer should be kept on the burn and covered with a thick gauze with liquid paraffin or paraffin-based antibiotic ointment e.g. Flammazine (containing silver sulfadiazine). Application of such burn ointment will cause bitumen to soften, permitting a gentle bitumen removal after a few days.

- Another removal method is covering skin-adherent bitumen with a layer of fresh olive oil. Next, bitumen can be removed by gentle rubbing with gauze soaked in olive oil. The remaining bitumen can be removed by bandaging burns with gauze soaked in olive oil. The bandage should be changed every 4 hours. After 24 hours, all the remaining bitumen can be removed. Then, burns should be disinfected and treated following standard procedures.

CIRCULAR BURN WITH A TOURNIQUET EFFECT

When hot liquid bitumen covers a limb or another body part completely, bitumen hardening during cooling may cause the tourniquet effect and the resulting swelling of the burn. In such an event bitumen should be immediately softened and/or crushed to prevent blood circulation problems.

HOT BITUMEN EYE BURNS

Unqualified personnel should not make any attempts at removal of bitumen from the eyes. Burn victim should be immediately referred to an ophthalmologist or an ophthalmology hospital ward for diagnosis and treatment.