

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**



# **SAFETY ALERT**

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**SAFETY ALERT 14-2**

## **The Fire Challenge**

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A disturbing new trend is manifesting itself online on social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube called "The Fire Challenge."

The fire challenge involves teenagers pouring an ignitable liquid, often rubbing alcohol, on their bare skin and igniting it while another teenager takes photos or video of the event. The photos and video are subsequently uploaded to the various social media sites for the world's online community to watch and share. The imbecilic act is supposed to elicit laughter as onlookers and internet viewers watch the reaction from the person who is on fire.

Accurate statistics are not available as to the number of individuals injured or killed as a result of performing this stunt but at least one death of a 15 year-old boy in Buffalo, NY has been confirmed and several documented injuries have occurred.

Several news stories regarding the practice report that when young survivors are interviewed, most say they didn't give much thought to the possibility of being injured or killed and they didn't realize the fire would be so intense.

Since many of these reported incidents involve the ignitable liquid being poured on the chest, emergency responders must be particularly aware of the potential for serious respiratory burns when treating victims, in addition to the obvious external burns.

In accordance with American Burn Association recommended guidelines, and in keeping with the policies of The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas, a certified burn treatment facility for care and transport of burn patients, all individuals meeting the following criteria should be referred to the nearest certified burn center:

- All Partial thickness (second degree) burns  $\geq 10\%$  TBSA;
- All Full thickness (3rd degree) burns, regardless of size;
- All chemical, inhalation and electrical burns;
- Any burns to the face, feet, joints or genitalia;
- Patients with pre-existing medical disorders compromising outcome;
- Patients with burns and concomitant trauma (Follow regional medical control and triage protocols);
- Patients requiring extensive social, emotional or long-term rehabilitation;
- Pediatric burns without qualified personnel or equipment.

In New Jersey, consult with The Burn Center at St. Barnabas Hospital directly at (973) 322-5920.

**PLEASE POST IMMEDIATELY**