COLD BURNS

Introduction
Cold burns can occur from skin contact with very cold objects or when unprotected skin is exposed to liquid propane. The liquid then evaporates withdrawing a large amount of heat from this area causing tissue damage.

Has a customer suffered a Cold Burn?
Cold burns are not always immediately obvious, they can take some hours to become evident, by then treatment is more difficult.

Adopt the “precautionary principle.” If a Customer reports that LPG has come into contact with them or their clothes you must assume that they have suffered a cold burn, even if they do not report discomfort at the time.

If they report a “tingling” feeling they may have received a severe burn.

First Aid
What to do: In severe cases (obvious injury, freezing of the skin or clothing, red “patch” larger than a thumb nail or reported “tingling”), medical help must be sought immediately (call 999) and the casualty must not drive anywhere before receiving medical treatment.

The medical services procedures for cold burn should be as for hot burns. In all cases:
1. Immerse in or flush affected area with TEPID water (not hot), for at least 10 minutes.
2. Loosen any clothing that may restrict blood flow.
3. Thaw out any frozen clothing with tepid water but DO NOT remove.
4. Keep contaminated clothing away from ignition sources as some gas may be given off during thawing.
5. Loosely cover the affected area with a clean, dry dressing.
6. Do not allow smoking or drinking alcohol.
7. If medical help has not been summoned, recommend the customer contacts their GP or hospital A & E department for a check up as soon as possible.
Do not alarm the customer. Stress that medical attention is a wise precaution and that all injuries or potential injuries to customers and staff are treated in the same way.

**Reporting**
Like any other incident cold burns or potential cold burns must be reported and investigated in accordance with company Health and Safety procedures.

**References:**
Emergency Action for Burns. HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 1444 1

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