

Severe Skin Burns

At Healthfirst, we are committed to helping providers accurately document and code their patients' health records. This tip sheet is intended to assist providers and coding staff with the documentation and ICD-10-CM selection on services submitted to Healthfirst specifically for common types of **Severe Skin Burns**. It provides information from industry sources about proper coding practice. However, this document does not represent or guarantee that Healthfirst will cover and/or pay for services outlined. Coverage decisions are based on the terms of the applicable subscriber contract/ evidence of coverage and the provider's participation agreement. This includes the determination of any amounts that Healthfirst or the member owes the provider.

A third-degree burn, also known as a full-thickness burn, is most severe and affects the epidermis and dermis skin layers. They also extend into subcutaneous tissue. These burns result in a leathery, stiff, and dry appearance.

ICD-10 Codes & Descriptions

Codes	Descriptions
T31.1*	Burns involving 10-19% of body surface
T31.2*	Burns involving 20-29% of body surface
T31.3*	Burns involving 30-39% of body surface
T31.4*	Burns involving 40-49% of body surface
T31.5*	Burns involving 50-59% of body surface
T31.6*	Burns involving 60-69% of body surface
T31.7*	Burns involving 70-79% of body surface
T31.8*	Burns involving 80-89% of body surface
T31.9*	Burns involving 90% or more of body surface
T32.1*	Corrosions involving 10-19% of body surface
T32.2*	Corrosions involving 20-29% of body surface
T32.3*	Corrosions involving 30-39% of body surface
T32.4*	Corrosions involving 40-49% of body surface

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T32.5*	Corrosions involving 50-59% of body surface
T32.6*	Corrosions involving 60-69% of body surface
T32.7*	Corrosions involving 70-79% of body surface
T32.8*	Corrosions involving 80-89% of body surface
T32.9*	Corrosions involving 90% or more of body surface

*Requires fifth digit to specify the total body surface

- 1 - 10-19% third degree burns,
- 2 - 20-29% third degree burns,
- 3 - 30-39% third degree burns,
- 4 - 40-49% third degree burns,
- 5 - 50-59% third degree burns,
- 6 - 60-69% third degree burns,
- 7 - 70-79% third degree burns,
- 8 - 80-89% third degree burns,
- 9 - 90% or more third degree burns

Documentation Recommendation

Documents should Include	Please Specify the Degree	Type of Burn	Treatment/Plan
- Anatomic body site - Laterality (left, right, bilateral), when appropriate - Multiple body sites involved - Total body surface involved in burn (may use the rule of 9's to estimate) - Indicate the intent (self, assault, accidental) - Indicate the activity when burn/corrosion occurs - Indicate the place of occurrence	- First Degree - Second Degree - Third Degree - Fourth Degree	- Thermal - Chemical - Electrical - Radiation - Friction	- Water-based treatments - Intravenous Fluids to prevent dehydration - Pain and anxiety medicines - Burn creams and ointments - Dressings - Intravenous Antibiotics - Tetanus shot - Physical and occupational therapy - Surgery: Skin Grafts

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Coding Tips

- **T31*** category is to be used as the primary code only when the site of the burn is unspecified. It should be used as a supplementary code with categories **T20-T25** when the site is specified. (**T20-T25.799S**)
- When there are burns of the same local site of varying degrees, use the code indicating the highest degree documented in the medical record. Sequence first the code with the highest degree of burn in cases of multiple burns.
- Categories **T31-T32** classify the extent of body surface affected by the burn or corrosion and are useful as an adjunctive set of codes in assessing morbidity and mortality in burn centers
 - These categories may also be used when no further information is available, as in a patient who is briefly brought to an emergency department, stabilized, and transported to a specialty unit.
- The rule of nines is basically to break the adult body down into smaller anatomical regions. Each anatomical region is roughly 9 percent of the body as a whole.
 - If more than one anatomical area is burned, calculation of total body surface area is that taking the number of anatomical areas affected and multiplying by nine. The anatomical regions include:
 - Head
 - Left arm
 - Right arm
 - Upper torso
 - Upper back
 - Lower torso
 - Lower back
 - Front of left leg
 - Front of right leg
 - Back of left leg
 - Back of right leg
 - Genitals

Coding Example

Case 1	The patient presents ER for Burns involving 10-19% of body surface with 10-19% third degree burns that occurred due to a house fire. What is the appropriate assignment for the burn injury?
ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Reported	T31.11 - Burns involving 10-19% of body surface with 10-19% third degree burns
Rationale	When site is not specified then use the unspecified severe skin burn category code based on affected total body surface area.

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Documentation and Coding

References

- [ICD-10-CM Official Coding Guidelines FY2026](#)
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/burns/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20370545>
- codingclinicadvisor.com

Questions?

Contact us at [#Risk Adjustments and clinical Documentation@healthfirst.org](mailto:#Risk_Adjustments_and_clinical_Documentation@healthfirst.org).

For additional documentation and coding guidance, please visit the coding section on HFproviders.org

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