

Hair grooming dangers

An East Lothian safety organisation is encouraging county households to take extra precautions to prevent young children becoming accidentally burned or scalded at home. The advice comes during National Child Home Safety Week (21-27 June 2010).

The East Lothian Home and Fire Safety Group is issuing five top tips to help county households recognise the risks in an average home. Young children are particularly susceptible to burns and scalds as their skin is 15 times thinner than an adults. While many people are aware of the dangers posed by equipment such as cookers and irons there are other potential hazards – including hair straighteners.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust found that hair straighteners can reach 220C and some can still be hot enough to burn a young child eight minutes after they have been unplugged.

Hair straightener burns are mostly seen in very young children (0-3) and are caused either from picking up, sitting on or standing on straighteners – injuries range from superficial to more severe burns. Apart from the risk from burns, hair straighteners have also been known to cause house fires if they are left switched on.

Claire Goodwin from the Home and Fire Safety Group said: “Young children may pick up hair straighteners in an attempt to copy an older sibling or parent. Unfortunately they remain very hot after use and can cause painful burns and scalds to delicate young skin. The key message is to treat hair straighteners as you would an iron and keep them well away from small children.

“We’re keen to encourage everyone to think about home safety. Accidents often occur when visiting grandparents, other relatives or friends whose homes may not be as child friendly. A few simple changes can avoid a painful burn occurring. ”

To raise awareness of the issue, the East Lothian Home and

Fire Safety Group is running a competition to win one of 20 thermal hair straightener bags.

The bags can accommodate unplugged straighteners while they are hot to prevent painful accidents. Simply answer the following question: "How long after use do straighteners stay hot enough to burn a child?"

Email your answer along with your name, home address and phone number to cgoodwin@eastlothian.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 9 July 2010 to be in with a chance of winning. Only one entry per person will be accepted.

The first 20 entries chosen at random from the hat after the closing date will win a thermal hair straightener bag and a home safety pack.