First Aid for Burns Fatality File

Burn Severity Report

Spencer Beach didn’t want to go to work. As a flooring service technician, he had spent several days removing linoleum from a home under construction in Edmonton. On the third day, he only had to finish the laundry room and half bathroom, but he was considering calling in sick – something he never did. Despite the warning bells in his head, he went to the job site. He was working on his hands and knees when he heard a loud whistle and a bang. Beach was immediately engulfed in a flash fire that spread quickly throughout the entire house. He tried to open the front and back doors but they wouldn’t budge, since the fire was sucking up all the oxygen. He ran to the garage and tried to open the door, but it wouldn’t open either.

“My clothes were immediately burning, my hair was immediately melting, the skin on my face felt like it was shrinking, the pain was really deep,” Beach recalls.

After about 20 seconds, he was completely drained and collapsed on the ground. Time stopped. The heat and pain all disappeared. Beach had a near death experience. Then he thought about his wife and unborn child and he somehow found the will to try again. He got up, pulled the garage door as hard as he could and, miraculously, he got out.