

Section 13: EMERGENCY EYEWASH AND SHOWER

INTRODUCTION

For work where there is a possibility for your eyes or body to be exposed to injurious chemicals and/or material, emergency washing facilities must be provided in your immediate work area. Emergency eyewashes and/or showers will be provided, depending on the hazard present.

APPLICABILITY

An emergency eyewash must be present when there is potential for an employee's eyes to be exposed to corrosives, strong irritants or substances with a significant degree of toxicity. These chemicals include acids, caustics, peroxides, aldehydes, pesticides and concentrated detergents, among many other products. Consult the Safety and Claims Management office (206-477-3350) to determine if an eyewash is necessary for the chemicals you use.

An emergency shower must be present when there is the potential for major portions of an employee's body to contact corrosives, strong irritants or substances with a significant degree of toxicity. These include the same items listed above for eyewashes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Management of each department must ensure that all products used by employees are reviewed for any hazardous or toxic components, as required by the Hazard Communication and the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) Program (Section 9). Safety Data Sheets for products should indicate if there is concern for eye damage or injury from exposure to the product. Please consult with your Safety and Health Professional at Safety and Claims Management (206-477-3350) for advice on whether the intended use of the product would require an eyewash or shower.

TRAINING

All potentially-affected employees must be trained about the hazards of the chemicals and the proper use of the equipment.

EMERGENCY EYEWASH

The eyewash must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must have a tepid water range of 60-100 degrees
- Flushes both eyes simultaneously while the user holds his/her eyes open
- Has a valve that remains on without user assistance
- Delivers at least 0.4 gallons of water per minute for at least fifteen minutes

- Meets the ANSI Z358.1 – 2009 standards

EMERGENCY SHOWER

The shower must deliver water to cascade over the user's entire body at a minimum rate of 20 gallons per minute for at least fifteen minutes. The shower must meet the ANSI Z358.1 – 2009 standards.

LOCATION AND MAINTENANCE

Emergency eyewashes and showers must be located at a travel distance of no more than 50 feet and take no more than 10 seconds to reach. Aisles must be kept free of obstacles for easy access for a person who may not be able to see.

Plumbed eyewashes and showers must be activated weekly to ensure operation and to keep water in the pipes fresh and uncontaminated. Weekly testing helps clear the supply lines of sediment and bacteria build-up caused from stagnant water. Annual inspections meeting the manufacturer's recommendations are required.

Self-contained (non-plumbed) eyewashes must have their water changed and be cleaned in strict accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations to prevent biological contamination of the water which can cause serious, debilitating eye infections. Generally, open units are changed every 6 months and sealed units every 2 years.

USE OF EMERGENCY EYEWASHES AND SHOWERS

If a contaminant contacts the eyes, immediately go to the eyewash and turn on the water. Hold open both sets of eyelids with your fingers and flush the eyes for at least fifteen minutes. The fifteen minutes period of flushing is very important to remove chemicals that stubbornly attach to the surface of the eye and to remove chemicals that may have already penetrated the surface. Have someone assist you if possible.

If a contaminant contacts a significant portion of the body, then immediately go to the emergency shower and turn it on. Remove any clothing that was contacted (all clothing if necessary), and get under the shower for at least fifteen minutes. Again, this time period may be critical to remove certain chemicals. Do not put the contaminated clothing back on. Have someone assist you if possible.