



SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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NOV. 19, 2021

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EMERGENCY SHOWERS & EYEWASH STATIONS

OBJECTIVE When work tasks require the use of chemicals that are corrosive or severely irritating to the skin or are toxic when absorbed through the skin, an emergency shower and eyewash station must be available to employees. A few seconds can make the difference between minor injury and blindness, or a serious chemical burn, so it is important to know where eyewash stations and emergency showers are located, how to get to them quickly, and how to operate them.

EMERGENCY SHOWERS

THE EMERGENCY SHOWER SHOULD BE within a 10-second walk (approximately 50 feet) from the chemical workstation. Keep pathways clear, prevent shock hazards by keeping electrical equipment and outlets away from the shower area, and test the shower monthly or according to the manufacturer's instructions to ensure it activates.

If you are contaminated with a chemical, stay calm and act immediately. Chemicals can do a lot of damage in just a few seconds. Don't hesitate—head directly to the shower. Notify a coworker for help getting to the shower and calling 911 if necessary. Activate the shower by pulling the lever. Once you activate it, the water will stay on. Showers are self-contained or plumbed, so water may run onto the floor (a facility crew can clean up after the emergency). You can usually stop the shower by pushing the lever up.

If the chemicals have saturated your clothing, remove them. If they are on fire, allow the water to extinguish the flames. Don't pull clothing off of burned or damaged skin. Remove jewelry, contacts and your shoes. Let the water wash over your body to decontaminate for 15 minutes. You can use the eyewash station simultaneously if needed, or shield your eyes to prevent splashes and cross-contamination. Coworkers can help with clothing and equipment removal and decontamination. Coworkers should assist and monitor for medical symptoms and shock. Keep extra clothes around to shield and warm victims afterward. Emergency showers are first aid only. You should seek medical follow-up after chemical exposure. Remember, wearing your personal protective equipment and following safe work procedures can prevent emergencies.





EYEWASH STATIONS

Using the correct safety glasses, goggles and face shields can prevent about 90 percent of occupational eye injuries. But if a chemical splash, dust, mist, spark or other contaminant does get into your eyes, you need to act fast. That's why eyewash stations should never be more than 10 seconds (or about 50 feet) from an eye hazard.

Here's what to do if you get a contaminant in your eyes and need to use an eyewash station:

- Hold your eyes open with your fingers
- Position your eyes over the flowing water to flush out contaminants
- Keep your eyes open and roll your eyes to help remove contaminants
- Avoid rubbing your eyes or removing anything imbedded in your eyeball
- If you are wearing contacts, take them out while continuing to flush your eyes
- Continue flushing your eyes for a minimum of 15 minutes
- Seek medical attention



RESOURCES

Gallagher National Risk Control (PDF)

New Pig[®] Expert Advice

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 2,000 work-related eye injuries occur every day, according to Prevent Blindness, a volunteer eye health and safety organization.

It is estimated that 90 percent of occupational injuries are preventable through the proper use of protective safety eyewear. But when safety glasses, goggles and face shields aren't worn properly, splashes, dust, sparks, mists and other contaminants can get into an employee's eyes.





SIGN-IN SHEET

EMERGENCY SHOWERS & EYEWASH STATIONS

Trainer: _____ Trainer's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Organization: _____ Department: _____

Class Participants:

Name: _____	Signature: _____
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