

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C792: Eyewash Stations

Introduction: Some workplaces require extra eye protection because eye injuries are more likely to happen. Eye injuries are the most common preventable causes of blindness. One can treat many minor eye irritations by flushing the eye with water; however, more serious injuries require immediate medical attention.

- Emergency eyewash stations are required for work environments that expose employees to harmful chemicals. Accidents can still happen despite taking proper precautions. Emergency eyewash stations provide immediate decontamination. The first 15 seconds after exposure to a corrosive hazardous chemical are critical.
- Eyewash stations are designed to immediately flush contaminants out of the eyes after exposure. They should be located near high-risk areas and should have the ability to be activated immediately and conveniently.

Washing the Eyes (first aid for chemical splash in the eye):

[1] Flush your eye with clean, lukewarm tap water for at least 20 minutes. Get into the shower and aim a gentle stream of water on the forehead over the affected eye or on the bridge of the nose if both eyes are affected. You can also put your head down and turn it to the side and then hold your affected eye open under a gently running faucet.

[2] Wash your hands with soap and water. Thoroughly rinse your hands to be sure no chemical or soap is left on them. Your first goal is to get the chemical off the surface of your eye, but then you need to make sure to remove the chemical from your hands.

[3] Remove contact lenses. Take them out if they didn't come out during the flush.

[4] Seek emergency medical assistance. After following the above steps, seek emergency care or, if necessary, call 911. Take the chemical container or the name of the chemical with you to the emergency department. If readily available, wear sunglasses because your eyes will be sensitive to light. Protect your eyes while on the way to get help.

- Do not rub your eye causing further damage. Don't put anything on your eyes except water or contact lens saline rinse. Do not use eye drops unless emergency personnel tell you to do so.
- Water does not neutralize contaminants; it only dilutes and washes them away requiring a lot of water.
- The flushing or rinsing time can be modified if the identity and properties of the chemical are known.
 - A minimum 20 minute flushing period if nature of the contaminant is not known
 - A minimum 5-min. flushing time is recommended for mildly irritating chemicals
 - 20 min. flushing time for non-penetrating corrosives
 - At least 20 min. flushing time for moderate-to-severe irritants
 - At least 60 min. flushing time for penetrating corrosives

Non-penetrating corrosives are chemicals which react with human tissue to form a protective layer which limits the extent of damage. Most acids are non-penetrating corrosives. Penetrating corrosives, alkalies, hydrofluoric acid and phenol, enter the skin or eyes deeply.

Penetrating corrosives require longer water flushing (a minimum of 60 minutes) than non-penetrating corrosives (a minimum of 20 minutes). The total amount of water in self-contained systems should exceed the volume required to deliver water at the recommended flow rates and flushing times.

Maintenance of Eyewash Stations: Test your stations weekly, ensuring all parts are functioning. Flush water through the system so that contaminants do not accumulate.

Conclusion: In all cases, if irritation persists, repeat the flushing procedure. It is important to get medical attention as soon as possible after first aid has been given. A physician familiar with procedures for treating chemical contamination of the eyes should be consulted after washing the eyes.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

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