



Eye Washes and Showers

Department of Environmental Health and Safety
800 West Campbell Rd., SG10
Richardson, TX 75080-3021
Phone 972-883-2381/4111 Fax 972-883-6115

<http://www.utdallas.edu/ehs>

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Emergency Eyewash / Shower Policy

Eye washes and safety showers are an important part to any laboratory. These devices can help save a life in the event of gross chemical contamination. You should have a functioning eyewash and safety shower within 10 seconds clear travel of your workspace.



EYEWASH AND SHOWER SAFETY

I. AREAS REQUIRING EYEWASH FOUNTAINS — SAFETY SHOWERS

A. In areas where chemicals are stored, handled or used, emergency flood showers and eyewash fountains should be available and located within 25 feet of the area where accidental spillages are likely to occur. Body showers and eyewash fountains must be constructed as an integral unit so that both facilities may be operated by an individual user. Typical locations where body showers and eyewash fountains should be located are:

1. Laboratories using chemicals
2. Battery charging and storage areas
3. Chemical storage and dispensing areas

II. PROCEDURE

- A. Body showers must provide a massive, sudden flow of water over the entire body and should be equipped with a specially designed deluge head with a quick opening valve. Its location should be clearly marked and access to the emergency showers must be as direct and free from obstructions as possible. The major factors to consider when installing such a shower are large available quantities of water, constant pressure, constant temperature, proper drainage, and a safe distance from electrical outlets. It is important to note that an ordinary shower head or a spray nozzle on a garden hose does not deliver the volume of water necessary to provide for rapid flushing of the chemical.
- B. Eyewash facilities should provide a continuous flow of potable water and be capable of washing both eyes simultaneously with large quantities of water. The unit should be designed to provide for hands free operation so that the user can hold both eyes open during irrigation. Portable eyewash bottles do not fulfill these criteria. The eyes should be irrigated continuously for at least 15 minutes or until medical help arrives.

What you can do?

- If you are exposed to chemicals and need to use an eyewash/safety shower, you should flush the affected area for at least fifteen minutes to completely remove the chemical. Be sure to contact a physician if the situation warrants.
- Eyewashes should be checked weekly or at least monthly by laboratory personnel to ensure water flow and quality. This helps clean out any rust, scale deposits, or bacteria that may accumulate.
- The area around the safety equipment should always be free of clutter. It's impossible to get to cluttered eyewash when your eyes are full of acid.
- The shower pull should be kept at a height that can be reached by all people in the laboratory.
- Eyewash nozzles should be protected by plastic end caps. These should be loose enough to be removed by the flow of water, but secure enough to prevent contamination from dust and chemicals.
- Portable squeeze bottles are not acceptable as eyewash units.
- Eyewashes and safety showers should never be substituted for use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

What EH&S can do for you?

- Inspects the eyewash and emergency showers once a year.
- Provide expert advice on the location of installation, safety training around the area, and use of PPE's.

If you need further information regarding the same, please contact EH&S at 4111.