



## TOOLBOX TALK: EMERGENCY EYEWASH & SHOWERS

### The Importance of Emergency Eyewash & Showers

Every day, approximately one thousand work-related eye injuries occur in the United States. Every year, eye injuries account for more than \$3 million in lost production, medical and workers' compensation costs. OSHA estimates 90% of these eye injuries are avoidable with the proper use of safety eyewear. If you have 10 or fewer employees, OSHA says that your employees "must know their role" during emergencies, but your plan does not have to be in writing.

#### WHAT TO DO IF DANGEROUS PARTICLES GET INTO YOUR EYES:

##### AN EYEWASH/SHOWER IS REQUIRED IF:

- The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) specifies the chemical in use is toxic, caustic, or corrosive
- The SDS states that severe or serious eye damage may result
- Warnings such as "causes permanent eye damage" or "causes chemical burns" are displayed on containers

##### EYEWASH/SHOWERS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

- Pure clean water or, in the case of portable devices, saline solution

- A hands free stay open valve that should begin operating within a second or less

- Constant water flow for a full 15 minutes

- Highly visible markings and signs

- The heads of the units (water flow pattern) must be positioned 33" to 53" from the surface on which the user stands and 6" minimum from the wall

- Eyewash fluid must irrigate and flush both eyes simultaneously

- The use of tepid water, between 60° and 100° F

##### EYEWASH/SHOWER ACCESSIBILITY:

- The single most important treatment for eye injuries is irrigation within 10 seconds (about 55 feet) of the incident. Make sure no barriers are in the way of the eyewash/shower. Victims should not have to climb over or around obstacles to locate the eyewash station.

##### CLEAN AND FUNCTIONAL EQUIPMENT:

- Plumbed eyewash stations/showers should be inspected weekly to ensure they are clean and functioning properly. Portable units require an anti-bacterial additive to ensure

proper water sanitation. If possible, use purified water as this reduces the potential for secondary eye infections.

#### HOW TO USE AN EYEWASH/SHOWER STATION PROPERLY:

- As soon as possible, flush the eyes with water or eyewash solution, use your fingers to hold your eyes open as wide as possible

- Roll your eyeballs as much as possible to get rid of any loose particles under the eyelids

- Make sure nothing comes in contact with your eyes except water to remove particles

- Irrigate for at least 15 minutes, then immediately seek medical care. If possible, continue irrigation during transport by having a portable eyewash system ready that can be carried along

## We Are Here

Do you have a question about safety and health?

Contact us and we can assist you in making your workplace safer.

[safeatwork.mo.gov](https://safeatwork.mo.gov)

**I understand the information presented and how to use emergency eye-wash & showers.**

**COMPANY:**

**DATE:**

**EMPLOYEE NAME:**

**EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Learn more ways to keep your workplace safe.  
Visit [safeatwork.mo.gov](https://safeatwork.mo.gov).**

