



Eye Wash and Its Role in Your Safety and First Aid Plans

It's ingrained in your staff that protective eyewear is a must when there's a chance of injury from flying debris or splashing liquids. You may even have fixed eye wash stations located on-site, but the reality is that foreign matter does find its way around protective eyewear. And, particularly with corrosives, the seconds it can take to get to a central eye wash station may determine the difference between full recovery and loss of sight.

Personal eye wash products offer an inexpensive solution that can be utilized to enhance your emergency preparedness, and improve critical response time. Self-contained eye wash stations can be easily installed at every work station where hazards are present and require no on-going maintenance other than to periodically checking the expiration date. In addition, portable bottles with built-in eye cups and use instructions are easy to add to job boxes and tool kits, making them ideal for mobile work forces.

Tips for Choosing Eye Wash Units

- **Choose an effective fluid.**

The OSHA mandate concerning eye washes in the workplace is simple; any workplace where corrosives are present must have eye wash. As everyone knows, no amount of water will ever neutralize an acid or alkali, but rather, in quantity can dilute it. This is why the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) recommends a 15 minute minimum flush time. However, given that permanent corneal damage can occur in as little as 45 seconds for accidents involving acids or alkalis, treatment time is measured in seconds, not minutes. In such cases, a pH neutralizing formula, available in mountable stations or as portable bottles offers an excellent and effective treatment, as neutralization of even concentrated acids or alkalis can be achieved in as little as 20 seconds. Saline fluids formulated to mimic human tears, and also used in personal eye wash products, are effective for most other debris and mild irritants.

- **Eye-wash cups** make thorough and effective rinsing easier, by conforming to the shape of the eye and helping to hold it open. Look for bottles with a built-in, flexible eye-cup and drain holes that allow debris and contaminants to flow away from the eye.
- **Bottles** should be easy-to-open and work from both an upright and inverted position to best accommodate the injured person.
- **Instructions for use** should be clear, concise and universal.
- **Personal emergency eye wash** should be ANSI compliant, sterile filled and sealed, and be printed with expiration dates.

Working safe means being prepared. Be sure to review use instructions with personnel on a monthly basis. If you already have a fixed station in your workplace, you have validated the need for eye wash. Now is the time to improve your preparedness by including self-contained eye washes. *Bel-Art – SP Scienceware offers several choices in eye wash stations and refill bottles and the PLUM line of eye wash products distributed by Bel-Art – SP Scienceware includes exclusive pH neutralizing formulas.*

