

Emergency eyewashes are important in the workplace if you are working with chemicals that can splash or materials that may fly into your eyes. Know where the emergency eyewash stations are located in your workplace and how to use them. Use of safety glasses with side-shields or splash goggles can prevent the need to use an emergency eyewash station.

Review Your Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all of these:

- in the Physical & Chemical properties section: **if pH is 2.5 or less or 11 or higher**
- in the Eye Hazards section: “corrosive”, “caustic”, “burns”, severe or strong irritant
- in the Composition/Ingredients section: **if it contains sodium hydroxide (caustic soda or lye)**
- If chemical in eye requires 15-minute flush in the first-aid section, you need an eyewash

If you have an accident at work that involves your eyes, an emergency eyewash station can protect you from serious eye damage or the loss of your sight. When you work with corrosive, irritating, toxic, or tissue-damaging materials in the workplace, it is important to have an emergency eyewash station immediately available.

Emergency eyewash stations can be plumbed into the wall or provided as stand-alone stations with eyewash solution tanks or bottles. Faucet mounted eyewashes must be activated with one action or on-off valve that activates in one second or less and remains on without user assistance until intentionally turned off. *No-hands operation, so both hands are free to hold eyelids open*

All eyewash stations should be reachable within 10 seconds or within 50 feet from the areas where a splash or eye contamination is likely to occur. Pathways to eyewash stations should be free of barriers such as locked or latched doors (swinging doors are allowed), equipment, material storage, or poor housekeeping.

All eyewashes must have annual inspections to ensure they are operating properly. Plumbed eyewash stations need clean bowls, dust covers for the nozzles, and good water pressure. Check eyewash tanks for expired solutions according to the manufacturer’s instructions. All eyewash stations should be protected from freezing and provide room temperature to lukewarm flushing fluids. Activating handles should start the flow of fluids immediately. On a weekly basis, check plumbed eyewash stations to ensure that they are clean and working correctly. Use inspection check sheets for annual, periodic, and weekly inspections and keep copies of these records.

If your eyes are accidentally injured, immediately flush them with water or eyewash solution for at least 15 minutes with cold water. When you start flushing your eye, hold your eyelids open and roll your eyeballs around to allow the fluid to flow on the entire surface of the eye and under the eyelid. Seek medical attention as soon as possible after flushing your eye.

For more information:
<https://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/EmergencyWash/default.asp>