



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

MSU DAWG TRACKS

Emergency eyewash and shower stations that are in the right spot and in good working order can keep an accidental situation from becoming a permanent impairment.

Regulations state *“where the eyes or body of any person may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body shall be provided within the work area for immediate emergency use.”* (29 CFR 1910.151)

Identify operations where hazardous materials are present. Some areas could be:

- Laboratories.
- Shops – maintenance, metal & woodworking.
- Custodial areas.
- Chemical storage.
- Ag chemical mixing/handling areas.

Common Hazards Include:

- Particulates such as dust, dirt, wood chips, sand, powder.
- Metal shavings, concrete, filings
- Pesticides, Insecticides, Herbicides,
- Solvents, stains, paints, paint thinner
- Bloodborne pathogens, bodily fluids, or other biohazards.
- Caustic water treatment chemicals
- Fuels, cleaning solvents, anti-freeze
- Laboratory chemicals
- Bleach, chlorine, ammonia
- Battery acid, starter fluid, oils, hydraulic fluid
- Glass
- Flammable Liquids

All employees in areas with these hazards must be instructed on the location and proper operation of emergency stations.

Medical opinion is that a 15-minute flush of the eyes and body with water will provide emergency first aid mitigation of corrosive or caustic splash exposures. For this reason, employees must be able to reach the eyewash/shower station within 10 seconds (about 55 feet) and have a clear unobstructed path. An obstruction could be brooms or tools leaned against the eyewash/shower, a trash can or equipment in the way, or even a door that has to be passed through to get to the eyewash/shower is considered an obstruction. If the hazard is non-corrosive, one door can be present, as long as it opens in the same direction of travel as the person.

Emergency eyewash/shower stations that are exposed to freezing temperatures must be protected. They must also deliver tepid water, which is a temperature range of 60-100°F. No one wants scalding water to cause further damage.

So, check your work areas and determine if an emergency eyewash/shower station is needed. If you already have one, perform routine checks to make sure it all works as intended, does not have blocked access, and is flushed out periodically.

For more info contact:

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Risk Mgmt./Loss Control

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Sources:

<https://www.eyewashdirect.com>

<https://safetyequipment.org>