

A Safe Workplace

A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-C	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 1 of 3 Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
Subject: G-17	Emergency Eyewash Equipment	Effective: April 01, 2005 Revised: April 1, 2011

Refer to part 21 Emergency Washing Facilities of *The Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations*.

Under *The Workplace Safety and Health Act* an employer is required to provide emergency eyewash equipment where there is a risk of eye injury from exposure to hazardous chemical substances. Accidental exposure of eyes to chemical substances in any form can result in irritation, temporary or permanent impairment or blindness.

All eyewash equipment must meet the requirements identified in the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment Z358.1-04. Council must request proof of certification from the supplier when purchasing.

There are three types of emergency eye wash stations as follows:

1. drench showers (plumbed units)
2. self contained wall mounted units (with preservative solutions)
3. portable bottles (with preservative solutions for use when operating equipment)

The following outlines the operational requirements, emergency use procedure and solution change out requirements:

Operational Requirements

- all employees must be familiar with the location and use of emergency eye wash stations;
- all employees must read and understand the manufacturers' instruction manual;
- there should be no sharp projections anywhere in the operating area of the unit;
- the location and the path to these units must always be clear of obstructions;
- the eyewash unit should be identified with a highly visible sign. The area around or behind, or both, should be painted a bright color;
- all employees who may be exposed to eye injury should be instructed in the proper use of emergency eyewash units;
- plumbed eyewash units should be activated weekly to flush the line and verify proper operation;
- self contained wall mounted units should be inspected a minimum of

A Safe Workplace

A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-C	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 2 of 3 Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
Subject: G-17	Emergency Eyewash Equipment	Effective: April 01, 2005 Revised: April 1, 2011

weekly;

- vehicles must be equipped with portable emergency eye wash bottles; and
- portable bottles can support but not replace proper eyewash stations.

Emergency Use Procedure:

1. Activate eye wash station.
2. Hold eyelids open using the thumb and index finger.
3. Water or eye solution should not be aimed directly onto the eyeball, but at the base of the nose.
4. Flush eyes and eyelids for a minimum of 15 minutes. Roll eyes around to ensure full rinsing, and hold eyelids open while flushing.
5. Contact lenses must be removed as soon as possible to ensure that chemicals are not trapped behind the lenses.
6. Seek medical attention without delay to ensure there are no lasting effects of the exposure.

The first few seconds following an eye injury are often critical to keeping injury to a minimum. A personal eyewash unit may be kept in the immediate vicinity of employees working in a potentially hazardous area. The main purpose of these units is to supply immediate flushing. With this accomplished, the injured individual should then proceed to a plumbed or self-contained eyewash and flush the eyes for the required 15-minute period. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) should be consulted for additional recommendations.

Solution Change Out Requirements:

The following are solution change out requirements for self contained wall mounted units and portable bottles:

- manufacturers' solution change out requirements **must be followed**;
- self contained wall mounted units must contain the preservative solution as per the manufacturers' instructions and must be changed at required intervals;

A Safe Workplace

A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-C	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 3 of 3
Subject: G-17	Emergency Eyewash Equipment	Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
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- portable bottles must be replaced as per the expiry date and when used;
- use proper lifting procedures for self contained wall mounted units (*Manual Lifting*, section II1-F-SWP-1). Full units may weigh up to sixty pounds. Get assistance when lifting unit off and onto wall mounts;
- drain existing eye solution and rinse with clean water;
- fill with fresh eye solution. Ensure fill opening and hands are clean during filling; and
- records should be kept related to change out requirements and completion.

Community Responsibilities

Council must ensure that:

- emergency eye wash equipment is provided, operated and change out solution requirements are followed.