



Helping to make your workplace a safe place  
[www.MySafetyPoint.com](http://www.MySafetyPoint.com)

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

### **The Importance of Eye & Face Protection**

More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day, with 10-20 percent resulting in temporary or permanent vision loss. However, 90 percent of all workplace eye injuries can be avoided by using the proper safety eyewear. Employers are responsible for not only providing the proper eye and face protection, but they are responsible for requiring their employees to *wear* the proper protection when working in areas with the potential for hazards.

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## Common causes of eye injuries

- Flying objects (bits of metal, glass, etc.). \* Note - when working with flying particles employers must require eye protection that also protects from the side (i.e. side shields).
- Tools
- Dust, dirt, aggregate, exhaust by products and metal particles
- Chemicals (acids, bases, fuels, solvents)
- Welding light and electrical arc

## Common types of eye injuries

- Corneal abrasions and conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Aggregate or metal particles or slivers embedded in the eye
- Chemical or petroleum splash or burn
- Welder's flash burn
- Eyeball laceration
- Facial contusion and black eye
- Blood borne pathogen exposure from blood or other body fluids.

## Safety eyewear protection includes

- Non-prescription and prescription safety glasses. Use safety glasses for general working conditions where there may be minor dust, chips or flying particles.
- Goggles. Use goggles for higher impact protection, greater dust, chemical splash and welding light protection.
- Face shields. Use face shields for highest impact, full-face protection for spraying, chipping and grinding hazards.
- Welding helmets. Use welding helmets when welding to protect against the exposure of welding light that causes severe burns to the eye and surrounding tissue- "welder's flash."



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## Eye Wash Stations & Showers

Federal regulations state eyewash stations and showers are required “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.”

**Employers first need to determine whether or not they are required to provide this type of equipment. To do this, they should identify hazards and determine exposures.**

### Employers should consider:

Equipment,  
Handling and use, and  
Worksite conditions

### Employers should evaluate factors such as:

Physical state  
pH  
Temperature  
Reactivity

### Employers should consult:

MSDS  
Manufacturer  
Chemical guidance

Once it has been determined that this type of equipment is necessary, the next step is to choose the type of station needed. There are two types available.

- The first is a plumbed unit.
- The second is a self-contained unit.

These must be located on the same level as the hazard (must be immediately adjacent for strong acids and caustics). The area must be well lit and clearly identified. The access to the station must be free of obstructions and be located no more than 10 seconds away (approximately 55 feet).

## Employers must also address the following:

- Flushing fluid
- Flow rate
- Water temperature
- Activation

The flushing fluid must be potable water, preserved water, preserved buffered saline solution or other medically acceptable solution. Regarding the flow rate, they must be capable of providing .4 gallons per minute for 15 minutes and showers 20 gallons per minute for 15 minutes. The temperature of the flushing fluid should be between 60 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Activation

Self-contained units should be:

- Visually inspected weekly

### Plumbed units should be:

- Tested weekly
- Run units for at least three minutes to reduce the chance of a bacterial infection

### References: MySafetyPoint Technical Bulletin

For more information on Health and Safety related issues affecting workers, visit OSHA's Website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) and MySafetyPoint at [www.MySafetyPoint.com](http://www.MySafetyPoint.com)

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