



S&W READY MIX CONCRETE COMPANY	PLANT #:
CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL / SAFETY PROGRAM	JUNE
EYEWASH STATIONS - MONTHLY TRAINING TOPIC	

EYEWASH STATIONS

Hopefully you'll never need one, but if you do let's hope it's clean and accessible. If you get foreign particles in your eyes or a chemical spill on your body, an emergency eyewash or shower station is the most important initial step in first-aid treatment. Chemical burns to the eye are among the most *urgent* of emergencies.

When are Eyewash Stations/Showers Required?

- The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) indicates a chemical in use is caustic, toxic, or corrosive.
- The MSDS informs that serious eye damage may result.
- Warnings such as "causes chemical burns" or "causes permanent eye damage" are posted on container labels.

Accessibility: The single most important treatment for chemically-burned eyes is copious irrigation within *seconds* of injury. This means that victims should not have to climb over or around obstacles to find the eyewash station. Make sure there are no barriers to the unit.

Clean, Functional Equipment: Shower stations should be inspected often to insure they function properly with adequate water flow, and are clean and sanitary. Portable eyewash units are an option in areas where plumbed in water is not accessible or of high enough quality. Portable units also need an anti-bacterial additive to ensure proper water sanitation. Flushing with *any* water is better than none, but purified water reduces potential for secondary eye infections.

Inspections: Like other emergency equipment, eyewash/shower stations must be inspected. These units require a weekly documented inspection to ensure accessibility, adequate water supply and cleanliness of the unit.

Training in Proper Use: Employees who are exposed to possible chemical splashes must know *in advance* how to use an eyewash/shower station properly:

- **Immediately after the accident**, flood the eye with water or eyewash solution, using fingers to keep the eye open as wide as possible. Water may be colder than body temperature, which can be uncomfortable, but it is imperative to irrigate for the recommended period of time.
- **Roll the eyeball as much as possible**, to remove any loose particles retained under the eyelids. Do not put anything except water into the eyes to remove particles.
- **The eyes should be irrigated for at least 15 minutes** and the victim transported to a medical facility immediately. Continue irrigation of eyes during transport. The best way to accomplish this may be to have a portable eye-wash system ready, which can be carried along.



It's easy to forget about eye-wash stations or showers until they are needed in an emergency.

Don't let yours become buried or covered with dust. It could save your sight!