

MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

"SAFETY SHOWERS AND EYE WASHES"

Part of the "GENERAL SAFETY SERIES"

Quality Safety and Health Products, for Today...and Tomorrow

OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **No one wants to be in an accident. To prevent them we:**
 - Wear personal protective equipment.
 - Select apparatus carefully.
- **But, in spite of our precautions, accidents sometimes happen.**
 - Quick action is imperative.
 - A safety shower or eye wash can be very important.
- **There are many types of safety showers and eye washes.**
 - The best activate the water with one step.
 - Water then continues to flow until it is turned off.
- **Safety showers should have a strong enough flow to immediately drench the victim.**
 - They should also provide enough water for fifteen minutes of use.
- **Eye washes should produce a soft stream or spray.**
 - Often this is aerated.
 - The water should also last for at least fifteen minutes.
- **Showers/eye washes should be located wherever corrosives or other hazardous substances exist.**
 - These chemicals can cause severe damage to skin and eyes.
- **Corrosives include:**
 - Strong acids.
 - Strong bases.
 - Dehydrating agents.
 - Oxidizing agents.

- **Specific examples of corrosives include:**
 - Phosphoric acid (can severely irritate and burn the skin and eyes).
 - Xylene (found in many cleaners, it can cause severe eye irritation).

- **Always take the proper steps to avoid corrosives' effects.**
 - Wear personal protective equipment.
 - Plan in advance for emergencies.
 - Read Material Safety Data Sheets before starting work.
 - Review your facility's Hazard Communication Program.

- **You should know the locations of safety showers and eye washes, and how to use them.**
 - You should be able to find them with your eyes closed.

- **If a chemical has gotten into your eyes you may not be able to see your surroundings clearly.**
 - One of the best ways to prepare for this is to practice getting to the closest shower and eye wash station blindfolded.
 - It's a good idea to have everyone in your facility run through this exercise several times a year.

- **It's important to make it easy to reach showers and eye washes.**
 - Keep routes free of equipment and supplies.
 - Keep areas under showers clear.

- **Shower and eye wash equipment should be routinely tested (OSHA recommends that they should be "stress tested" periodically).**
 - Put together a schedule.
 - Mark the dates and results of testing on a tag.
 - Water should be checked to make sure it's potable, not stagnant.

- **If you are splashed by a hazardous substance, take the following steps:**
 - Stay calm, do not panic.
 - Call out for help.
 - Get to a shower or eye wash immediately.
- **If you are helping a victim, take charge.**
 - Make sure the victim is completely drenched.
 - Remove personal protective equipment.
 - Completely soak their clothes, then remove them (at least down to underwear).
 - Remove their shoes.
- **"Waste" water from showers and eye washes should be surrounded with absorbent material.**
 - This will prevent the spread of contamination.
- **After the initial deluge, the victim can be taken to an alternate area for further decontamination.**
 - Remove their remaining clothing.
 - Then complete the showering process.
 - The entire showering time should be no less than fifteen minutes.
- **"Helpers" will also probably be wet.**
 - They may also need to be decontaminated.
 - Hypothermia may be a consideration.
- **Stripped off clothing should be decontaminated prior to normal laundering.**
 - In certain situations, shower water and clothing may need to be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- **You need to determine if a shower drains into the sewer.**
 - If so, outside agencies may need to be notified about contamination.
- **For showers that have drains, some water should always be kept in the trap.**
 - This keeps sewer gases from rising into the room.

- **If a chemical splash is constrained to the eye area, you should use an eye wash.**
 - It should provide a continuous, gentle stream of water.
- **Get to the eye wash as quickly as possible.**
 - Hold the eye open with your fingers.
 - Rinse completely, under and behind the eyelid.
- **If only one eye was splashed, don't contaminate the other eye with residual water.**
 - Drench the contaminated eye for at least fifteen minutes.
- **Many portable eye wash units do not supply fifteen minutes of water.**
 - Use these only for an initial wash.
 - Follow up with a fifteen minute rinse.
- **Hoses and similar sources of water require you to use at least one hand to hold them.**
 - They don't free up both hands for manipulating the injured eye.
 - Because of this they should not be used as eye washes.
- **Small eye wash bottles don't provide adequate rinsing.**
 - Only use them when nothing else is available.
 - Then the victim will need to get to another source of water immediately.
- **Safety showers and eye washes are emergency equipment.**
 - After they're used, victims should get immediate medical attention.
 - All uses of showers and eye washes must be reported to your supervisor.
- **Safety showers and eye washes are as important to your well-being as gloves and goggles.**
 - You need to know how to use them in case of emergency.

***** SUMMARY *****

- **Know the locations of the safety showers and eye washes in your facility.**
- **Keep routes to showers and eye washes clear.**
- **Know what steps to take if a chemical splash does occur.**
- **Get splash victims medical attention immediately.**
- **By keeping your facility's safety showers and eye washes in good shape... and knowing how to use them... you may be able to prevent a serious injury, even save someone's eyesight.**