

Emergency Showers & Eyewash Policy



An average 200 Canadian workers suffer an eye injury on the job each day. Many of these injuries are the result of chemical splashes or burns that cause a corrosive substance to get into the eye (or on the skin). The first 10 to 15 seconds after exposure are critical. Delaying treatment, even for a few seconds, may contribute to serious injury. That's why [OHS laws require employers to maintain emergency showers and eyewash stations](#) providing for on-the-spot flushing and decontamination for workers exposed to hazardous products that can injure the eyes. Here's a template emergency showers and eyewash policy you can adapt for your own workplace to prevent eye injuries and ensure compliance with OHS requirements.

1. PURPOSE

ABC Company has adopted this Policy to ensure that adequate emergency eyewash stations, shower facilities, and supplies are in place at its worksites to protect workers that are exposed to the risk of eye or skin injury due to contact with a biological or chemical substance in accordance with the [province] Occupational Health and Safety Act and other applicable regulations ("Regulations") as well as the ABC Company Occupational Health and Safety Program ("OHS Program"), and other applicable requirements and standards.

2. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy:

- **“Adequate”** means sufficient for both its intended and actual use and sufficient to protect a worker from occupational injury;
- **“Competent”** means possessing knowledge, experience, and training to perform a specific duty safely and effectively;
- **“Emergency shower”** means a device designed to deliver flushing fluid in sufficient volume to cause that fluid to cascade over the entire body;
- **“Eyewash”** means a device used to provide fluid to irrigate and flush the eyes;
- **“Flushing fluid”** means potable water or other medically acceptable fluid such as preserved buffered saline solution; and
- **“Potable water”** means water that is fit to drink.

3. POLICY

ABC Company recognizes that the provision of on-site emergency eyewash, shower facilities, and supplies is an essential measure in preventing eye and skin injuries resulting from exposure to hazardous biological and chemical substances as well as an obligation under OHS and other safety laws and is committed to implementing all reasonably practicable measures to provide such protection in accordance with the principles, requirements, and procedures set out in this Policy.

4. WORKERS PROTECTED

The intent of this Policy is to ensure that all workers engaged to work at ABC Company worksites who are or may be exposed to eye or skin injury due to contact with hazardous biological and chemical substances is properly protected

regardless of who pays or employs those workers, including:

- Full or part-time workers employed by ABC Company;
- Temporary employees placed by an outside agency to work at the site;
- Contract labourers engaged to perform work at the site;
- Volunteers who work at the site for free; and
- Workers employed by constructors, prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors to perform work at the site under a contract with ABC Company.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Employer

Employer Owners, corporate officers and directors, upper managers, and other representatives of ABC Company who may be defined as an “employer” under the Act are responsible for overall implementation of this Policy, including ensuring that:

- The resources necessary to implement this Policy are provided;
- The hazard assessment referred to in Section 6 of this Policy is carried out and appropriately reviewed;
- The required eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and flushing supplies are provided;
- The training, information, and instruction required is provided to workers; and
- This Policy is appropriately reviewed.

5.2 Safety Coordinator/Site Manager

The Safety Coordinator, facility manager, or other person designated as being in charge of safety at the worksite must be thoroughly familiar with and oversee implementation

of this Policy, including ensuring that:

- A proper hazard assessment is carried out by a qualified person in accordance with Section 6 of the Policy;
- The eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and flushing supplies required to protect workers under this Policy are provided;
- Such facilities, showers, and flushing supplies are properly used, inspected, and maintained;
- Access to such facilities, showers, and flushing supplies is kept readily accessible to workers and free from obstructions at all times;
- All exposed workers are notified of the location of and instructed in the proper use, inspection, and maintenance of the eyewash facilities and emergency showers in their area;
- This Policy is applied to any constructors, prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors hired to perform work at ABC Company worksites involving exposure to eye or skin injury from contact with hazardous biological or chemical substances;
- All of the assessments, inspection, maintenance, and other records required by this Policy are properly kept; and
- This Policy is appropriately reviewed.

5.3 Supervisors

Supervisors, lead-hands, foremen, and other persons in charge of work operations involving exposure to eye and skin injury due to contact with hazardous substances are responsible for ensuring that:

- A proper hazard assessment is carried out by a qualified person in accordance with Section 6 of the Policy;
- The eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and

flushing supplies required to protect workers under this Policy are provided;

- Such facilities, showers, and flushing supplies are properly used, inspected, and maintained;
- Access to such facilities, showers, and flushing supplies is kept readily available to workers and free from obstructions at all times;
- All exposed workers are notified of the location of and instructed in the proper use, inspection, and maintenance of the eyewash facilities and emergency showers in their area;
- Workers are held accountable for complying with this Policy, including where necessary via the imposition of discipline for infractions;
- This Policy is applied to the workers of any constructors, prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors hired to perform work at ABC Company worksites involving exposure to eye or skin injury from contact with hazardous biological or chemical substances;
- All of the assessments, inspection, maintenance, and other records required by this Policy are properly kept; and
- This Policy is appropriately reviewed.

5.4 Workers

Workers must cooperate with ABC Company in its efforts to implement this Policy by:

- Ensuring they know the location of the eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and flushing fluids in their work areas;
- Ensuring they know how to properly use, inspect, and maintain those eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and flushing fluids;
- Keeping access to eyewash facilities and emergency

showers clear and free of obstructions at all times;

- Immediately notifying their supervisor or manager of any problems with the facilities, supplies, conditions, or obstructions impeding access to them; and
- Properly using, inspecting, and maintaining the provided facilities and supplies.

5.5 JHSC/Safety Reps

ABC Company will consult with and secure the participation of the workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (“JHSC”), Health and Safety Representative (“Safety Rep”), or where no JHSC or Safety Rep exists, the affected workers at the site in developing and implementing this Policy, which may include asking for input into:

- Assessment of eye and skin hazards due to contact with biological and chemical substances;
- Selection of appropriate emergency facilities, equipment, and supplies;
- Inspection of eyewash facilities, emergency showers, and flushing fluids;
- Inspection to confirm that eyewash facilities and emergency showers are accessible to workers and free of obstructions;
- Investigation of eye and skin injuries; and/or
- Review of this Policy.

5.6 Visitors

Visitors to ABC Company worksites must:

- Stay away from areas of the worksite where they may be exposed to eye or skin injury due to contact with a hazardous biological or chemical substance exist unless they:

- Are authorized to be in those areas;
- Are aware of the locations of any eyewash stations, emergency showers, or flushing fluids in those areas; and
- Receive instructions on how to use those eyewash stations, emergency showers, or flushing fluids;
- Keep pathways to eyewash stations and emergency showers accessible and free of obstructions and refrain from engaging in any conduct that distracts or interferes with the implementation of the procedures and protections set out in this Policy.

6. Hazard identification & assessment

Worker exposure to the risk of eye and skin injury due to contact with hazardous biological or chemical substances will be among the issues that the competent person designated to perform a written hazard assessment under Section X of the ABC Company Biological & Chemicals Safety Policy will consider in performing such hazard assessment. As provided by the foregoing Policy, copies of the written biological and chemical hazard assessment will be provided to the JHSC, Safety Rep or, where there is no JHSC or Safety Rep for the workplace, communicated directly or made available to the workers at the site.

7. GENERAL EYE/SKIN INJURY EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDS

Where it is determined that a worker is exposed to a potential hazard of injury to the eye or skin due to contact with a biological or chemical substance, ABC Company will implement

appropriate measures to protect the worker which will include keeping or installing one or more of the following:

- Antidotes, flushing fluids, or washes for eye and skin injuries;
- Eyewash facilities for eye injuries; and/or
- Quick-acting emergency showers for skin injuries.

8. EYEWASH FACILITIES & EMERGENCY SHOWERS

ABC Company will ensure that the eyewash facilities and emergency showers required under this Policy are selected, designed, installed, inspected, and maintained in accordance with the applicable version of CSA Standard ANSI/ISEA, *American National Standard for Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment*, and the equipment manufacturer's specifications.

8.1 Location

Where an eyewash or emergency shower is provided, ABC Company will ensure that it is located or installed in a conspicuous location as near as practicable and in no event more than 17 metres (55 feet) from where the hazardous chemical or biological substance is used, kept, or handled at the worksite and that such facilities are readily accessible to workers without obstructions such as doors or moving partitions, cabinets, or other barriers that may be closed or locked, or equipment that must be moved for the worker to access and/or operate the facility.

8.2 Design, Construction & Installation

ABC Company will ensure that any eyewash and emergency showers provided:

- Are designed so that they can be activated in less

than 1 second and remain operational without the user having to place their hands on the valve (or lever, handle, etc.);

- Have the valve in an easily located place;
- Have enough room to allow users to hold their eyelids open with their hands while their eyes and face are still in the stream;
- Are constructed of noncorrosive materials; and
- Are installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

8.3 Flow & Performance

Where an eyewash station is provided, ABC Company will ensure that it has a minimum flow of 75.7 litres/minute (20 gallons/minute) for a minimum of 15 minutes so as to deliver a fluid flow volume and pressure that is great enough to wash away the hazardous agent but not great enough to cause discomfort or injury.

8.4 Plumbed Eyewash Facilities

If a plumbed eyewash facility is provided, ABC Company will ensure that the water supply is potable and that it is flushed at least once a week or more often where necessary to minimize the risk of particulate and/or microorganism buildup in the flushing water.

8.5 Self-Contained Eyewash Facilities

If a self-contained eyewash facility is provided, ABC Company will ensure that the flushing fluid is sterile water, preserved buffered saline solution, or a solution commercially formulated and manufactured for use in eyewash facilities and that such solutions are not used past the manufacturer's indicated expiry date and remain sealed and/or maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Potable water will be used as the flushing

fluid in self-contained units only if the entire volume is changed weekly and records are kept documenting the date of change that are initialed by the responsible person.

8.6 Nozzles

ABC Company will ensure that nozzles used for dispensing flushing fluid are covered to prevent contamination and that, once activated, the nozzle covers are automatically displaced so they do not hinder flushing.

9. ANTIDOTES, FLUSHING FLUIDS & WASHES

ABC Company will ensure that antidotes, flushing fluids, or washes provided are located in a conspicuous place that is readily accessible to workers and as near as practicable to where the hazardous chemical or biological substance is kept, handled, or used and that the instructions for use are also kept as near to that location as practicable and that such supplies are readily accessible to workers without obstructions such as doors or moving partitions, cabinets, or other barriers that may be closed, or locked or equipment that must be moved for the worker to access them. ABC Company will also ensure that fluids intended for use in flushing of the eyes are tempered, properly labeled, and kept at the optimal temperature range recommended by the manufacturer.

10. SIGNAGE

ABC Company will ensure that high visibility signs are used to mark eyewash facilities and emergency showers that can be easily seen throughout the entire area those units are designed to serve.

11. INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE

11.1 Inspection of Eyewash Facilities & Emergency Showers

ABC Company will ensure that eyewash facilities and emergency showers are maintained in a clean and serviceable manner at all times and inspected at appropriate intervals to verify that they are in operationally ready condition. Records will be kept listing:

- The date of inspection/maintenance;
- A brief description of the inspection finding;
- A brief description of any maintenance done; and
- The initials of the person responsible for the inspection or maintenance.

11.2. Inspection of Fluids

ABC Company will ensure that fluids used for the flushing of eyes and emergency showering are inspected at appropriate intervals to verify that they are clean, free of buildup, at the appropriate temperature range, and not in use past their expiry date and that flushing fluid found to be visibly contaminated or reasonably suspected of being contaminated is changed, and the unit is appropriately sanitized. Records will be kept listing:

- The date of inspection;
- A brief description of the inspection finding;
- A brief description of any cleaning actions or fluid changes; and
- The initials of the person responsible for the inspection or cleaning actions or fluid changes.

12. WORKER INSTRUCTION & TRAINING

ABC Company will ensure that all personnel who work or spend frequent time in an area where an eyewash facility and/or emergency shower is provided under this Policy receive training, information, and instruction about the unit, how to use it, and how to inspect and maintain it before they are required or permitted to engage in work involving exposure. Upon completing training and instruction, workers must demonstrate their competence in locating and using the equipment in an actual emergency situation.

13. CONSTRUCTORS, PRIME CONTRACTORS, CONTRACTORS & SUBCONTRACTORS

ABC Company will ensure that any constructors, prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors hired to perform work involving exposure to eye or skin injury from contact with a hazardous biological or chemical substance stored, handled, or used at an ABC Company worksite are, before such work begins:

- Notified about the hazards and the dangers they pose;
- Provided a copy of this Policy;
- Required to ensure that all of their affected workers are notified of the location of and shown how to use the facilities and supplies in their work area.

Constructors or prime contractors in control of work at an ABC Company worksite that involves exposure to eye or skin injury from contact with a hazardous biological or chemical substance stored, handled, or used at an ABC Company worksite will be required to provide exposed workers engaged in the contract work adequate protection against those hazards by either:

- Relying on the emergency facilities and supplies already in place at the worksite, including;
- Notifying all exposed workers of the location of those facilities and supplies;
- Ensuring that those workers are instructed in the proper use of those facilities and supplies; and
- Assuming all of the other applicable requirements under this Policy that apply to ABC Company, as employer; or
- Implementing equivalent emergency facilities and supplies that meet the requirements of the Regulations, and that are coordinated with and provide at least the same level of protection as this Policy to workers involved in the contract work who are exposed to eye and skin injury due to contact with a hazardous biological or chemical substance.

14. POLICY MONITORING & EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed, in consultation with the JHSC or Safety Rep, at least once a year and more often in response to incidents, injuries, illnesses, and changes affecting workers' health and safety.