

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Eyewash, Drench Hose and Safety Shower Maintenance, Inspection, Testing and Recordkeeping Procedures

BACKGROUND

The Occupational Safety and Health Standard, 29 CFR 1910.151 (c) requires, “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.”

The National Research Council 2011 publication, “Prudent Practices in the Laboratory: Handling and Management of Chemical Hazards”, updated version, as referenced in the Occupational Safety and Health Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1450 Toxic and Hazardous Substances, Appendix A, identifies the requirement for each laboratory handling toxic chemicals be equipped with an eyewash and an easily accessible drench-type safety shower. The referenced standard continues by stating, “*Eyewash fountains should be inspected at intervals of not less than 3 months and other safety equipment inspected regularly.*”

The American National Standard for Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment, ANSI Z358.1-2009 requires that, “Plumbed equipment shall be activated *weekly* for a period long enough to verify and ensure that flushing fluid is available.” As described, it also justifies this activity by stating that, “the intent is to ensure that there is a flushing fluid supply at the head of the device and to clear the supply line of any sediment build-up that could prevent fluid from being delivered to the head of the device and minimize microbial contamination due to sitting water.”

NOTE: Emergency flushing equipment is secondary to a planned and well executed chemical hygiene and emergency plan for each laboratory. Every effort must be made to control exposure through training, personal protective equipment and work practices.

POLICY

It is the policy of the College of Charleston, Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) that emergency eyewash and safety showers or similar flushing equipment be installed and maintained as described in the OSHA standard and NRC “Prudent Practices” as outlined above. These installations shall be in near proximity to, or within the immediate area, where an employee, staff or student could have an exposure to the skin, eyes, face or body due to a physically hazardous material. This equipment may include eyewash stations, emergency drench-type showers and drench hoses. Where the installation of plumbed eyewash and shower equipment is impractical, drench hoses, portable eyewash single use bottles or gravity-fed eyewash units are acceptable as long as they are pre-approved by the College of Charleston EH&S Department and employees are trained to understand that the use of this equipment is only to get them to a source of emergency plumbed flushing equipment. **It is not necessary to use a buffered solution or deionized (DI) water in any portable emergency flushing unit. Tepid potable water is sufficient; just assure adequate flooding of the skin or eyes is performed.**

RESPONSIBILITY

The College's *Director of Environmental Health and Safety* shall be responsible for assuring the compliance with this document by all affected Departments at the College. In addition, any process, device, or activity related to the preventive or routine maintenance of emergency flushing equipment must be pre-approved by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety.

Department Heads are responsible for assuring that emergency flushing equipment within their departments is maintained and is functioning properly. It is recommended that each unit supervisor, instructor, or lab manager be designated to assure the status of this equipment in accordance with the guidelines listed below.

Lab managers, instructors, unit supervisors are responsible for:

1. assuring that problems related to the maintenance or function of emergency flushing equipment are promptly reported to the department lab manager, and/or directly to Physical Plant (as applicable) by the web-based Maintenance Direct (see instructions on system use at: <http://physicalplant.cofc.edu/maintenance-direct/using.php>) or by telephone call (X3-5550);
2. assuring that eyewash stations and drench hoses in their designated areas are activated weekly and operation noted on the Activation log available attached to or posted in a conspicuous location in the proximity of the emergency flushing equipment;
3. coordinating with Physical Plant and EH&S to ensure the eyewash stations, drench hoses and emergency shower(s) in their designated areas are inspected and activated at least annually by Physical Plant and operation noted on the tag(s) attached to the emergency flushing equipment and
4. assuring that in their respective areas where portable eyewash single use bottles or gravity-fed units are used they are inspected weekly (by department designated personnel) and maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions. Inspections must be documented in the Activation log. If the water supply is noticeably contaminated this finding must be documented on the Activation log.
5. assuring training is provided to personnel on use of the emergency flushing equipment.

Lab managers, instructors, unit supervisors and students are responsible for assuring that the emergency flushing equipment is never obstructed or rendered inoperable through the accumulation of materials or storage that prevents immediate access to this equipment.

Physical Plant designated personnel are responsible for:

1. developing a system for numbering and recording inspections, maintenance issues, and replacement of emergency flushing equipment. (EHS will direct the process for inspection and dating of the equipment checks)
2. inspecting and testing the College's emergency flushing equipment on campus and all affected associated facilities at least annually;
3. noting the inspection and testing of emergency flushing equipment on the inspection tag(s) attached to the equipment;
4. coordinate with EH&S to replace equipment inspection tags, as appropriate;
5. responding in a timely manner to complaints of emergency flushing equipment failure or malfunction;
6. assuring that all work orders and maintenance records are maintained for each piece of emergency flushing equipment;
7. assuring that the emergency flushing equipment (to include drench hoses) has tepid potable water available at all times; and when not available, affected laboratories and other work areas where

hazardous materials are present are notified immediately to ensure alternative means for emergency flushing are on-hand;

8. modifying eyewash drains, if applicable, to allow for weekly departmental checks of the eyewash fountains and
9. providing an annual inspection and testing report to the Director of EH&S.

PROCEDURE

General Safety/Equipment Guidelines

1. All emergency flushing equipment must be clearly identified as prescribed by the College of Charleston Director of EH&S.
2. All emergency flushing equipment must be clear and unobstructed at all times.
3. No storage is permitted within the eyewash station basin or over the eyewash station or shower that would prevent immediate recognition of the location or access to the emergency flushing equipment. An area around the equipment should be properly marked with safety tape (yellow-black stripes) on the floor.
4. All emergency eyewash stations, and drench hoses, portable eyewash single use bottles or gravity-fed eyewash units shall be checked weekly by laboratory personnel or other person designated by the department as responsible for the laboratory.
5. All emergency flushing equipment shall be *inspected and tested* on an annual basis by designated Physical Plant personnel upon coordination with the department responsible person and EH&S Director and the process documented on the tag attached to the equipment. A report must be provided by designated Physical Plant personnel to the Director of EH&S. The report identifies the equipment number, the test conducted, the passing or failure of the test, any repairs that need to be made, and the date of submission of a work order or date the repairs were made.
6. If at any time the water supply to a section of a building (including wing, floor, room, or part of a room) is shut off, then all water flushing devices in that section shall be inspected and tested within a day of the restoration of the water supply.
7. When a piece of emergency flushing equipment is inoperable, the unit supervisor, laboratory manager, instructor shall assure that all employees or students that are working with a potentially hazardous material have been notified of the alternative flushing method prior to starting their work. This notification shall include the location of the next closest plumbed water source for flushing which should be mounted in close proximity to the hazard area.
8. In the event of a chemical incident requiring emergency flushing, immediately begin flushing the eyes or other body part affected. Other persons in the laboratory shall place a call to the College of Charleston EMS at 3-5611. Continue the flushing as directed by the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the hazardous material in use until EMS arrives to take control of the situation. Make every effort to have a SDS or other information available about the chemical that was involved in the incident. The attached page should be posted near each emergency flushing device located in each laboratory or work area.
9. The following information should be provided to any person who may have the opportunity to use an eyewash, or drench hose:
 - Turn eyewash on, with the stream flowing, use your hands to hold your eyelids open and roll eyeballs up and down and sideways to allow sufficient flow into and around the eyes
 - Flush eyes thoroughly for at least 15 minutes or as directed by the SDS, until EMS arrives and takes charge of your medical care
 - If the exposure potential was significant enough for emergency flushing, EMS and medical care shall always be sought

10. The following information should be provided to any person who may have the opportunity to use the *safety shower*:
 - Activate the shower by pulling on the lever or handle
 - In some cases, the shower may shut off automatically and will require pulling the handle again
 - Remove any contaminated clothing and stay in the shower to remove any hazardous material
 - Shower thoroughly for at least 15 minutes, or as directed by the SDS, until EMS arrives and takes charge of your medical care
 - If the exposure potential was significant enough for emergency flushing, EMS and medical care shall always be sought.
11. If any emergency flushing equipment is not operating properly, Physical Plant must be contacted by telephone (X3-5550) or using the on-line Maintenance Direct (see instructions on system use at: <http://physicalplant.cofc.edu/maintenance-direct/using.php>). Indicate that it is a safety issue to achieve top priority.
12. Any emergency use of emergency flushing equipment must be reported to the Director of EH&S (X3-6802) and an incident/accident form must be filled out as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident (see also Human Resources information at: <http://hr.cofc.edu/forms/index.php>).

Any questions related to this policy or its contents contact the College of Charleston Director of Environmental Health and Safety at X3-6802 (beaverr@cofc.edu).

**In Case of a Chemical
Emergency
Requiring the Use of an
Emergency Flushing Device**

- 1. Assist the person to the device and activate it**
- 2. While continuing to flush, have someone contact the College of Charleston EMS at 3-5611**
- 3. Continue to flush as instructed in the SDS or until the EMS arrives**
- 4. Provide SDS or other chemical information to EMS personnel**