

EYE WASH SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DEALERSHIP SERVICE CENTERS

Eye wash stations are a required safety device when corrosive or harmful exposures are present in the work environment. These safety devices may not be used very often in an auto service center, but if needed, can be the difference in saving an employee or losing their eye sight. There are a few Cal-OSHA requirements concerning eye wash stations that may not be general knowledge:

1. Eye wash systems 'shall be in accessible locations that require no more than 10 seconds for the injured person to reach',
2. Eye wash stations are to 'be maintained free of items which obstruct their use',
3. Eye wash stations should be designed to deliver 0.3 gallons per minute for 15 minutes, and
4. Plumbed eye wash systems 'shall be activated at least monthly to flush the line and to verify proper operation'. Other units 'shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions'.

Physical Audits:

To have a proactive and safe program regarding eye wash stations, someone needs to perform monthly physical audits of each station. The physical audits are to be documented, preferably at, or on the device, to show appropriate audits were performed (name or initials and date audit was performed).

- A. For plumbed eye wash stations, turn on water to verify clean, clear water runs out of the eye let openings and works as designed.
- B. For self-contained eye wash units, monthly audits are required to verify the level of water is up to satisfactory levels and that the fluid in the unit is either periodically changed out, or approved chemical treatments are performed per the manufacturer's directions.
- C. For both eye wash types discussed above, access to the eye wash station must not be blocked; including items blocking clear access to the eye wash station as well as objects left in or on the eye wash unit itself.

- D. Any issues must be immediately corrected and/or management made aware if corrections cannot be performed (as in an inoperable eye wash system).

Proactive procedures:

- a. Any employee using an eye wash should be required to report such use to their supervisor.
 - a. This requirement makes management aware of a potential or real injury, allows the employee to be monitored or sent to the doctor as needed. Without any knowledge, management is left unaware of a potential issue and the employee may suffer a serious eye infection requiring additional treatments compared to a simple wash-out.
 - b. The requirement also allows management to re-fill or perform needed maintenance so the system is ready in case its needed again.
- b. Any issues with eye wash systems noted by employees including: blocking of eye wash systems; or use of eye wash systems other than designed (tool holders); or missing protective eyelet covers; should be communicated to management or shop foreman.

Source: California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5162