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Safety Stations (integral Eye Wash and Drench Units)

Occupational Health and
Safety Service
HSD110E (rev 7)



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Five essential requirements for fresh mains water safety stations (eye wash and drench)

- A flow rate of not less than 6 litres per minute of drinking quality water.
Tanked or recycled water must never be used.
- Activation devices must be simple to use and easily accessible, even with impaired vision. For eye washes, one hand must be free to hold the eye open during washing.
- Instant and positive operation is essential. Supply valves must open quickly as maximum flooding action must be provided within 1 second.
- The equipment must be reliable and clean. It will have long periods of idleness but **when needed, it must work properly.**
- To prevent back flow problems and possible contamination, the safety station must not be sited in close proximity to waste disposal sinks, the small hand basin integral to the units is fine but the hose should not be able to dangle on the floor. The shower head must not be left in any sink in order to avoid contamination or back flow problems. **Hand held units must be replaced in the holders after use.**

This equipment is a control measure to deal with accidents under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations. Therefore it must be examined, maintained and tested regularly to maintain the equipment in “an efficient state, in proper working order and in good repair”.

Good maintenance is essential as it can ensure the reliability and increase the life of the equipment as well as preventing the build up of legionella bacterial in water supplies.

Records must be kept in close proximity to the unit, of test and cleaning dates and the records kept for a period of five years from the last entry.

Safety station locations should be visually inspected daily to ensure that there is free access to the unit.

Water flow should be activated at least weekly, and preferably daily, to flush the line and verify proper operation. This also confirms that the unit has not been isolated from the mains water supply for any reason.

It is **not** recommended that particulate filters are fitted in the supply line as these can quickly become contaminated. Frequent flushing will remove any scale or grit dislodged by work elsewhere in the building.

If the flow is discoloured or poor and the problem is persistent, contact Estate Management for advice.

Call extension 37784 for EM help desk.

Scale will build up in the shower heads, so either replace the shower head at intervals with a new unit or descale using a domestic descaling preparation. **NB: Flush the unit thoroughly after descaling.**

For disinfection of a unit, immerse it in a domestic preparation such as Miltons Fluid, following the instructions for dilution.
NB: Rinse and flush well after disinfection.

Policy on Refurbishment or New Build:

The Safety Office supports the Estate Management policy of fitting hand held emergency eye wash and drench units as safety stations in most new and most refurbished laboratories, subject to risk assessment (see below).

The new units are visually obvious and appropriate for the purpose. They are well drained, easily cleaned and reduce other hazards after use, such as wet floors. When installed in a laboratory, they are close to where the risk is highest so any incident can be dealt with rapidly.

These units are seen as replacing the 'corridor' style drench showers and the free-standing eye wash units containing sterile saline in single use containers. Although these 'single shot' eye wash bottles may be appropriate in certain circumstances. **This would be subject to the risk assessment.**

EM installs these units in compliance with the WRAS recommendation (Water Regulator Advisory Service).

However, there may be circumstances **were a risk assessment** of a process or procedure specifically identifies the need for a fixed high throughput drench shower as an emergency measure. In these cases a professional system **with appropriate drainage** and flushing/testing capabilities must be selected and the shower robustly managed by a named individual.

After risk assessment, consider removing **non-functional / deactivated** 'corridor' style drench showers to prevent any ambiguity when responding to an emergency.

Example of a service procedure:

1. Allocate a location reference for future identification
2. Check the unit is clearly visible in the work area
3. Ensure the surrounding area is free from obstructions or any other impediment that may restrict speedy use
4. Activate the unit to flush the line and verify proper operation
5. Check for any (accidental) damage
6. For some shower units, check any operating linkages for wear or breaks
7. Remove, check and clean/disinfect nozzles and diffuser roses and replace
8. Check flow rate and alter if necessary
9. Clean external sink unit
10. Record actions and date

Relevant regulations:

Health and Safety At Work etc. Act (1974)

Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (1981 as amended 2013 and 2018)

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002) as amended

Water Supply Regulations 2016

Ensure:

- People know where the units are and how to use them
- People know how to summon a first aider
- People know how to Complete an accident report and send to the Safety Office
- To keep the area around the unit clean, dry and clear of obstructions such as boxes or bins etc.
- **It is flushed / tested at least every week.**

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