TOTAL GROUP

SAFETY & EQUIPMENT GUIDE

Emergency Eyewash and Safety Shower Requirements for Industrial Worksites

Practical equipment guidance for industrial teams.

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General information only. Confirm site-specific equipment decisions, applicable requirements, and manufacturer instructions before purchase or use.

Emergency eyewash and safety shower equipment should be selected through a site-specific hazard assessment, informed by chemical safety data sheets (SDSs), the applicable jurisdiction, and manufacturer instructions. In the United States, OSHA requires suitable quick drenching or flushing facilities where eyes or body may be exposed to injurious corrosives, but its regulation does not set numerical flow or temperature values. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.151 and OSHA's interpretation explain that distinction. For Canadian sites, obligations must be confirmed by province or territory and by the site's applicable rules. ANSI/ISEA Z358.1 is widely used as technical guidance, while Canadian guidance directs employers to check local legislation and assess the actual hazard. CCOHS and the ISEA technical guide provide useful planning context.

> **Important:** This guide is general educational information, not legal, engineering, medical, or site-specific safety advice. Requirements depend on the workplace, chemicals, equipment, and jurisdiction. Complete a site-specific hazard assessment, follow the chemical SDS and equipment manufacturer instructions, and have a qualified reviewer confirm the final plan.

1 Key Takeaways

- Begin with the chemical hazard, exposure route, task, SDS first-aid information, and jurisdiction—not an equipment catalogue.

- OSHA's general-industry rule requires *suitable* quick drenching or flushing facilities for potential exposure to injurious corrosives; it does not state universal flow-rate or temperature figures.
- ANSI/ISEA Z358.1 technical guidance can help define readiness, but its application and local adoption should be verified for the site.
- Access, water delivery, drainage, freezing conditions, inspection ownership, and worker training all affect whether equipment can be used when needed.
- Personal wash bottles are supplementary; they do not replace an appropriate station capable of sustained flushing where one is required.

2 Start with a site-specific exposure assessment

Requirements for emergency eyewash and safety shower equipment start with the work, not the unit. Review the hazardous material, how it is handled, who may be exposed, the likely exposure route, and the first-aid direction in SDS Section 4. The assessment should also consider the work area, number of potentially exposed workers, shift coverage, and site emergency-response process. CCOHS identifies SDS information and local legislation as part of determining appropriate emergency washing arrangements. CCOHS guidance

This approach matters because the need for eye flushing, face flushing, body drenching, or a combination arrangement depends on a credible exposure scenario. It also keeps purchasing separate from the decision about what protection is suitable. A qualified reviewer should validate the planned configuration against the actual site conditions, applicable requirements, and equipment documentation.

3 Match the equipment category to the plausible exposure

An eyewash is intended to flush the eyes. An eye/face wash addresses the eyes and face, while an emergency shower is intended for body drenching. A combination unit may be considered where both eye/face and body exposure are plausible. CCOHS describes these categories and their distinct functions. CCOHS emergency shower and eyewash guidance

Portable, self-contained, and plumbed equipment have different capacity and maintenance considerations. Personal wash stations and eyewash bottles are supplementary; CCOHS says they do not replace a 15-minute-capable station where one is appropriate. Selection should follow the hazard assessment and manufacturer instructions—not a generic rule of thumb. CCOHS guidance

4 Separate the regulatory baseline from technical guidance

For U.S. general industry, 29 CFR 1910.151(c) requires suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body within the work area for immediate emergency use where an employee's eyes or body may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials. For construction work, the parallel language appears in 29 CFR 1926.50(g).

OSHA's published interpretation states that 1910.151(c) does not provide specific installation, operation, or flow-rate requirements. It assigns the employer responsibility to assess conditions—including water temperature—to provide suitable protection. OSHA standard interpretation Accordingly, it is not accurate to present a specific flow rate, temperature, or travel time as a universal OSHA requirement.

In Canada, CCOHS states that there is no Canadian standard for the design or placement of this equipment and advises checking local OHS legislation; it identifies ANSI/ISEA Z358.1 as generally used as a guide. CCOHS guidance New Brunswick illustrates why local verification matters: WorkSafeNB describes a provincial rule that refers to ANSI Z358.1-2009 or a standard providing equivalent or

better protection where eyes or skin could contact hazardous substances. That is a jurisdiction-specific example, not a Canada-wide conclusion.

5 Use ANSI/ISEA Z358.1 as a technical planning reference

ANSI/ISEA Z358.1 can help translate broad terms such as “suitable” and “immediate” into equipment and readiness considerations. At the time of the research, the standards listing identified **ANSI/ISEA Z358.1-2014 (R2020), Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment** as “Most Recent.” ISEA/Accuris standards listing

Before acting, confirm the current edition, its adoption or reference in the applicable jurisdiction, and relevant site, plumbing, or building requirements. The ISEA guide is useful technical context, but it does not replace regulatory review, a competent hazard assessment, or model-specific manufacturer instructions. ISEA Selection, Installation & Use Guide

6 Plan location for immediate, unobstructed use

A workable location is more than a point on a floor plan. The route should be practical for a worker who may be injured or have impaired vision. Consider same-level travel, an unobstructed path, lighting, clear identification, contamination risks, drainage, and conditions that could freeze or compromise the flushing fluid. CCOHS and ISEA both identify access and environmental conditions as planning factors. CCOHS and ISEA guide

The commonly referenced access-within-10-seconds measure is technical guidance associated with ANSI/ISEA, not a universal legal threshold. It should be evaluated in the context of the hazard, route, worker condition, and local requirements. A site should not rely on an approximate walking-distance calculation alone.

7 Check water delivery and flushing capability by equipment type

Technical guidance addresses sustained flushing, safe delivery, activation, and operation. The ISEA guide identifies 15-minute capability, activation in one second or less, continued operation until intentionally closed, and tepid delivery in the range of 60–100°F as ANSI/ISEA Z358.1-2014 (R2020) guidance. ISEA guide

CCOHS also presents ANSI-based equipment-specific figures: an emergency shower of at least 75.7 L/min (20 gpm) for at least 15 minutes, an eyewash of at least 1.5 L/min (0.4 gpm), and an eye/face wash of 11.4 L/min (3.0 gpm). CCOHS qualifies this with safe, non-injurious delivery. These are technical guidance figures by equipment category—not OSHA numerical requirements—and should be checked against the current source, local requirements, the selected unit, and manufacturer instructions. CCOHS guidance

8 Confirm the installation and procurement details before committing

> **Planning note:** This checklist supports a qualified review; it does not establish legal compliance or replace a site assessment, engineering review, SDS instructions, or manufacturer documentation.

Use the following concise checklist before installation, procurement, or publication of a site plan:

- [ ] Review the task, chemical hazards, exposure routes, and SDS first-aid information.

- [ ] Confirm the applicable U.S., provincial/territorial, local, site, plumbing, building, and fire requirements.
- [ ] Verify the proposed equipment category, location, access path, signs, lighting, and worker travel conditions.
- [ ] Confirm water or flushing-fluid supply, temperature control, drainage or waste handling, and outdoor/freezing conditions.
- [ ] Identify potentially exposed workers, shift coverage, training needs, inspection ownership, and emergency-response interfaces.
- [ ] Obtain and follow the selected equipment manufacturer's installation, operating, cleaning, testing, and maintenance instructions.

For related equipment browsing after the site assessment, see Total Group's Eyewash Stations & Eyewear Cleaners collection.

9 Test, inspect, train, and document for readiness

Provision alone is not readiness. The ISEA guide calls for weekly activation of plumbed devices, visual inspection and cleaning of self-contained equipment according to manufacturer instructions, and annual inspection of all equipment. ISEA guide Those measures should be integrated with the device documentation, site procedure, and any applicable jurisdictional requirement; they should not be treated as a generic interval for every device or location.

Assign ownership for inspections, corrective actions, recordkeeping, and communication when a unit is unavailable. Workers should know where equipment is located and how to use it before an emergency occurs. CCOHS also emphasizes training and inspection as part of maintaining usable emergency equipment. CCOHS guidance

10 After an exposure, start flushing and follow the response plan

When an exposure occurs, the response must follow the chemical SDS and the site's emergency and medical-response process. CCOHS advises beginning flushing immediately rather than delaying to remove contact lenses; further response should be directed by the SDS and competent medical or emergency-response personnel. CCOHS guidance

This is general information, not medical direction for an individual incident. The site's trained responders and established process should govern escalation, communication, and follow-up.

11 Frequently asked questions

11.1 Does OSHA require an eyewash station?

Where an employee's eyes or body may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, OSHA's general-industry rule requires suitable quick drenching or flushing facilities within the work area for immediate emergency use. Whether a specific eyewash, shower, eye/face wash, or combination unit is suitable depends on the assessed exposure and conditions. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.151

11.2 Is the 10-second rule law?

Not as a universal rule. The 10-second access measure is ANSI/ISEA technical guidance cited in the ISEA guide. OSHA's 1910.151(c) does not prescribe a specific travel time, and Canadian requirements vary by jurisdiction. ISEA guide OSHA interpretation

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11.3 How often should an eyewash station be tested?

The ISEA guide calls for weekly activation of plumbed devices and annual inspection of all equipment; self-contained equipment should be visually inspected and cleaned according to manufacturer instructions. Confirm the schedule against the unit documentation, site process, and local requirements. ISEA guide

11.4 Can an eyewash bottle replace a station?

No, not where a 15-minute-capable station is appropriate. CCOHS describes personal wash stations and eyewash bottles as supplementary equipment, rather than replacements for such a station. CCOHS guidance

11.5 What water temperature is recommended?

The ISEA guide identifies a tepid 60–100°F delivery range as ANSI/ISEA Z358.1-2014 (R2020) guidance. OSHA's general-industry regulation does not specify a numerical temperature; suitability must be assessed for the conditions and verified with the equipment documentation and applicable requirements. ISEA guide OSHA interpretation

Limits of this guide: This article is general information, not legal advice, a work procedure, a site assessment, engineering advice, or a substitute for manufacturer instructions. It does not determine compliance or prescribe a configuration for any workplace. Requirements must be confirmed for the actual hazards, equipment, jurisdiction, and site conditions by a qualified reviewer.

Before purchasing, installing, or publishing a site plan, arrange a qualified review of the hazards, SDSs, access, water delivery, maintenance ownership, and applicable requirements.

12 References

- OSHA — 29 CFR 1910.151, Medical services and first aid
- OSHA — 29 CFR 1926.50, Medical services and first aid
- OSHA — ANSI Z358.1 guidance for complying with 1910.151(c)
- International Safety Equipment Association / Accuris — ISEA Z358.1-2014 (R2020), Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment
- International Safety Equipment Association — Emergency Eyewash & Shower Equipment: Selection, Installation & Use Guide, Edition 2
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety — Emergency Showers and Eyewash Stations
- WorkSafeNB — Emergency Eyewash and Shower

Qualified Total Group review is required before Shopify publication.