

and must be refilled or replaced after use. Self-contained systems must never hold expired fluids.

- personal eyewash units with solution/squeeze bottles (supplementary eyewash that supports plumbed units, self-contained units, or both by delivering immediate flushing fluid for less than 15 minutes).



They provide support for plumbed or self-contained eyewash units, but they do not replace them. They cannot be used as a sole means of protection. However, they are useful because they allow for quick flushing of the eyes when plumbed or self-contained units are not immediately available. Upon flushing, personnel should seek a plumbed or self-contained unit and thoroughly flush the eyes according to the MSDS or available information.

If an EWF is used to flush the eyes, prompt medical attention is important, regardless of the severity of the injury.

### Getting Assistance

If an EWF is available, but you are not familiar with the specifications, responsibilities, and training, see separate fact sheet “Emergency Washing Facilities – Specifications, Responsibilities, and Training”, Laboratory Safety Manual

(<http://www.ehs.wsu.edu/labsafety.asp>), or SPPM S20.45 “Eyewashes and Safety Showers”.

If an EWF is required but one is not available, contact your supervisor, departmental safety committee, or Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). EH&S provides EWF assessments and will work with supervisors and safety committees to ensure installation of an ANSI approved EWF.

For additional information, contact EH&S.



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### Environmental Health & Safety

P.O. Box 641172  
Pullman, WA 99164-1172  
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Wenatchee.....509-663-8181  
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# Emergency Washing Facilities



# Determining Need & Location

Emergency washing facilities (EWF), such as eyewash, showers, or both, are needed where employees may be exposed to corrosive, strong irritant, toxic, or skin-absorptive chemicals that could injure the eyes or body. These facilities are designed to provide copious amounts of water to wash contaminants from the eyes and body.

### Determining Need

Assess the workplaces to identify chemicals that could injure the eyes or get onto the body during the course of work. Observe work practices, interview workers and review sources of information, such as material safety data sheets (MSDS), written standard operating procedures (SOPs), or similar documents that may help determine if personal protective equipment (PPE) and emergency washing facility are required.

Conduct assessments whenever new equipment, processes or chemicals are introduced or an injury or illness indicates the need.

### Personal Protective Equipment

The availability of an EWF does not replace the need for PPE. Select PPE based on the types of hazards identified during the assessments, level of protection



needed, fit and comfort.

Contact lenses do not provide protection from chemical splashes, but can be worn safely in combination with appropriate personal protective eyewear. For additional information, see EH&S fact sheet “Eye and Face Protection – The Eyes Have It” and SPPM S30.10, “General Requirements for Personal Protective Equipment.”

### EWF Types

Emergency washing facilities are either plumbed, self-contained, or personal units. Plumbed units are preferred where a clean water source is readily available. Self-contained units are effective where a water source is not readily available. Personal units are supplementary.

There are several types of units available. **Plumbed units** include:

- eyewashes (a device to irrigate and flush the eyes),
- eye/face washes (a device to irrigate and flush both the face and the eyes),
- safety showers (an assembly of a shower head controlled by a stay-open valve and operated by an approved control valve actuator),
- hand-held drench hoses (a single-headed emergency



washing device connected to flexible hoses used to irrigate and flush the face or other parts of the body). If your workplace is equipped with a drench hose and no eyewash, the drench hose can be used in case of emergency; however, an ANSI approved eyewash should be installed as soon as possible. Until installation, provisions should be made to always have two or more persons in the workplace when using chemicals that could damage the eyes. One person can then assist the injured by holding and directing the drench hose while the injured party is free to hold open the eyelids. Drench hoses provide support for emergency shower and eyewash units, but they do not replace them, and cannot be used as a sole means of protection. However, a drench hose is useful when the spill is small and does not require an emergency shower and can be used with a shower for local rinsing, particularly on the lower extremities.



- combination units (a combination of eyewash/shower or drench hose designed so all components operate individually).

**Several self-contained units** are also available:

- Eyewash/safety showers in which the device contains its own flushing fluid