



Eyewash Stations

August 2011

Purpose

To provide information for the use of the new eyewash fountains – Haws Model #7360B-7460B. Please also be aware of the availability of the entire product manual at <http://www.hawesco.com/emergency-equipment/emergency-equipment/eye-and-face-washes/7360B-7460B> which is also posted in your workplace or available on the station computers and on the EMS Education website at http://torontoems.ca/edu-site/equipment_training.html .

In addition this serves to remind staff that emergency eyewashes are a first aid measure and not a substitute for primary eye injury prevention requirements in the workplace, such as safe use of chemicals, tools, products, machinery, and equipment. In addition it is a requirement to wear personal protective equipment as appropriate to the task being performed and the potential for eye injury.

Hazards

The following are some examples of hazards with the potential to cause eye injuries, for Toronto EMS staff. It should be noted that eyewashes are not appropriate first aid for all eye hazards. Please see “Contraindications for Eyewash Fountain Use” in this document:

- Chemicals
- Administration of medications
- Flying objects
- Flying particles, dust, wind
- Harmful gases, vapours, powders
- Patient actions or bodily fluids
- Thermal hazards
- Ultraviolet light
- Electrical Hazards

Prevention

It is essential that all staff adhere to the safe use requirements for the products they use, and prevent exposure to hazards they encounter in the course of their work duties. Emergency eyewash stations are a first aid measure after an incident has already occurred, to help prevent permanent eye injury. They are not a substitute for safe work practices and personal protective equipment.

In addition to other safe work procedures, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are available in each workplace and should be referenced for the hazardous chemicals and their appropriate first aid and emergency response measures in our worksites. All staff should be familiar with

the safe use, storage, personal protective equipment, and first aid requirements for the products they use in the course of their work duties, and for the work activities they perform. Any questions, concerns, or deficiencies must be brought to the attention of your Superintendent.

USING THE EYEWASH FOUNTAIN

The first 10 to 15 seconds after exposure to a hazardous substance, especially a corrosive substance, are critical in preventing permanent eye injury. Accessible eyewash stations provide on-the-spot decontamination.

- Open water supply fully by pressing on the identified green paddle with your hand.
- Place eyes in water stream
- Hold both eyelids open with your fingers
- Have a co-worker call for appropriate medical attention
- Rinse until the time specified on the MSDS has been reached. Flushing time may vary depending on whether it is a mildly irritating chemical, moderate to severe irritant, and the corrosive nature of the product. If necessary, have a co-worker look up the appropriate time and then time you.

Contraindications for Eyewash Fountain Use

Eyewash fountains should not be used if it is known that eye contamination is metal or some other rigid solid fragment. In such an event both the victim's eyes should be gently immobilized in accordance with standard first aid procedures or MOHLTC BLS Standards (for paramedics).

Supplementary Eyewash Units

Eyewash bottles supplement plumbed and self-contained stations, but are not a substitute for eyewash fountains, where hazards are present that require prolonged eye flushing. They are portable and permit immediate flushing of contaminants or small particles. Since the fluid supply lasts for only a short period of time, the bottle may not be able to wash the eyes sufficiently. The main purpose of such a unit is to supply immediate flushing. Once accomplished, the user should proceed to the eyewash fountain and flush for the required flushing/ rinsing period.

Staff are reminded that prevention is the primary goal. To avoid the need to use supplementary eyewash units, all staff must adhere to safe use precautions and the wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment (for example eye and face shield protection as required). Toronto EMS has supplementary eyewash bottles available at our worksites, as well as saline in the ambulances. Please ensure you are familiar with the location of supplementary eyewash units in your work location, and speak to your Superintendent if you have any questions or concerns.

Inspection of Eyewash Fountains and Supplementary Units

All eyewash fountains and supplementary units must be inspected regularly as part of the

regular workplace inspections by JHSC/H&S representatives. In addition the units should be inspected after each use. Supplementary eyewash bottles must be replaced as required to ensure constant availability.

Any deficiencies identified by any staff in the workplace must *immediately* be brought to the attention of a Superintendent to implement the appropriate corrective actions.

References

Haws Eyewash Fountain Manual – Model 7360B-7460B

<http://www.hawesco.com/emergency-equipment/emergency-equipment/eye-and-face-washes/7360B-7460B>

ANSI Standard Z358.1-2009

Toronto EMS Infection Control Manual – Version 3.0

MOHLTC Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards – 3-21 and 4-7

Cluster B Safe Working Procedure-035.09

City of Toronto WHMIS Policy

Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act