

Access to emergency equipment is critical in environments like laboratories or shops where hazardous materials are used and stored. Eyewash stations can provide emergency relief in the event of exposure to the eye from hazardous liquids, vapors, dust, or particles. To ensure quick response in an emergency, eyewash stations must be easily accessible and operable.

Use an eyewash station immediately if you experience eye exposure to any of the following:

- Chemical splashes or vapors
- Biological material exposure
- Dust, debris, or other particulates causing irritation

If exposure occurs, notify your supervisor and Public Safety after flushing your eyes.



Signs indicating the presence of an eyewash are typically green and white.

User Guidance

1. Locate the nearest eyewash and activate the unit by either squeezing the handle or pushing/pulling the lever.
 - a. The handle should lock into place and operate hands-free.
2. With clean, gloveless, hands, hold your eyelids open with your fingers
 - a. (If applicable) Do not remove contact lenses prior to use.
3. Flush both eyes for at least 15 minutes.
 - a. Roll your eyes in all directions to ensure thorough rinsing.
 - b. (If applicable) Remove contact lenses while flushing.
4. Seek medical evaluation after flushing following your campus's emergency procedures. For Columbia University emergency lab procedures, please see the QR below.



Fun FAQ!

The stream from an eye wash might look forceful, but flow heads are engineered to create a laminar, low-pressure flow that won't damage the eye.

Laboratory Eyewash Maintenance Responsibilities



Keep an eye out! These new stickers will be placed in laboratories to identify eyewash locations.

Laboratories should keep the area around the eyewash clear and easily accessible at all times. Eyewashes must be flushed weekly by laboratory personnel for 30–60 seconds remove stagnant water, and staff should verify that water flows clearly within a few seconds of activation. Laboratories should also ensure that caps or dust covers are in place and open properly, and that the eyewash sign is clearly visible. Any issues, such as low or uneven flow, delayed activation, frozen or excessively hot water, discolored or cloudy water, or broken or missing caps, handles, or spray heads, should be reported immediately by submitting a facilities work order.

Have more questions? Reach out to EH&S at Labsafety@columbia.edu or give us a call

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< Emergency Drench Equipment.

CU Laboratory Emergency Procedures. >

