Chemical Safety Management

Information Sheet: Emergency safety shower and eyewash equipment testing

Purpose

The purpose of this information sheet is to guide the University on the testing requirements for emergency safety showers and eyewash facilities. The information should be read in conjunction with the Chemical Safety Management Procedure and the First Aid Management Procedure.

Note: emergency eyewash, shower, drench hose and combination units are not substitutes for primary personal protective equipment (e.g. face shield, eye protection, protective clothing). Emergency equipment is a contingency arrangement in the event of an accidental exposure to flying particles or chemical splashes/spills.

Q1 Which Australian Standard outlines the testing requirements for emergency safety showers and eyewash facilities?

AS 4775 (2007) Emergency eyewash and shower equipment and testing regimes sets out the requirements for the regular testing of the University's emergency safety showers and eyewash facilities.

The standard provides information that assists the University in meeting its WHS obligations and protecting the health and safety of workers (e.g. staff, title holders, volunteers and contractors) and students in the event of an emergency. Regular testing ensures that emergency equipment is operational and effective, and the water is clear of contamination in the event that someone has been exposed to hazardous chemicals/materials which may cause injury to the eyes or body e.g. a chemical spill.

Q2 How often are plumbed emergency shower, eyewash, and shower/eyewash combination units to be activated?

AS 4775 (2007) Emergency eyewash and shower equipment and testing regimes requires weekly activation for a period long enough to verify operation and ensure that clean flushing fluid is available.

The intent is to ensure that there is a flushing fluid supply at the outlet of the device, to clear the supply line of any sediment build-up that could prevent fluid from being delivered to the outlet of the device and to minimise microbial contamination due to stagnant water.

In accordance with the First Aid Management Procedure, the supervisor/person in control of the area must ensure activities that require first aid equipment in an emergency, are not conducted, unless the equipment has been maintained and tested in accordance with the Australian Standard. The Faculty Executive Director (or delegate) or Head of Branch (or delegate) are responsible for ensuring the regular testing and activation of equipment in their area(s) of responsibility. In addition, all units are inspected annually under a contractual arrangement managed by Capital Projects and Facilities Management (all campuses), to ensure conformance with the annual testing requirements of the Australian Standard. A tag is permanently attached to each shower unit, and the test is marked following the successful completion of the inspection.

Q3 Can the frequency of the testing of plumbed an emergency shower, eyewash, and shower/eyewash combination units be varied?

Yes. The frequency of the testing can be varied based on a documented risk assessment (consult with the HSW Team regarding this process).

If varied, the frequency of testing is to be authorised by the Faculty Executive Director (or delegate) or Head of Branch (or delegate) in consultation with workshop/laboratory technical officers and/or the supervisor/person in control of the area.

NOTE: Whatever the frequency of testing, it is essential that a systematic and verifiable testing routine of all safety showers and eyewash stations in your area of responsibility is in place.

Q4 What is to be included during a test of plumbed emergency showers, eyewashes and shower/eyewash combination units?

In addition to activating the equipment, it is recommended that the tester:

- visually inspects the equipment for any damage, leaks, or broken parts
- ensures that water flow is effective and continuous
- operates the shower for a sufficient amount of time to verify operation and remove any rust or pipe build-up, flushing the unit until the water runs clear
- ensures that plumbed and self-contained eyewash units remain activated for a minimum of 15 minutes, without the need for the operator's hands, and any time-limited fluid supply is clearly indicated by signage
- verifies that each shower has a visible emergency sign and securely attached calibration tag
- reports any problems identified during inspection and testing immediately to the relevant person in charge and tags out of operation where necessary
- ensures unobstructed access to the emergency equipment
- records the testing and keeps a record accordingly.

Note: AS 4775 (2007) Emergency eyewash and shower equipment and testing regimes provides guidance on testing regimes for emergency eyewash and shower equipment, and a risk assessment should be conducted if equipment is time-limited, to ensure that the 15-minute timeframe is sufficient, based on the nature of the hazardous materials at the location. It is also suggested that activation of the equipment is only done by a workshop/laboratory technical officer/person in control of the area.

Q5 Are testing records for plumbed emergency shower/eyewash units required?

Keeping records of testing helps demonstrate compliance activities are conducted in accordance with AS 4775 (2007) "Emergency eyewash and shower equipment and testing regimes.

The person in control of the area should maintain a logbook (or equivalent) of the periodic tests and activation which identifies:

- item
- location
- date of testing
- any issues found
- name of tester
- scheduled testing interval.

It is suggested that the testing record be located either adjacent to the unit or in a central area where several units are located on the same floor.

Q6 Where there are no drains in some areas, how can the water be managed when testing a plumbed emergency shower/eyewash unit?

When conducting periodic function testing of emergency equipment, it is important to consider factors such as water and drainage issues, the required length of time (15 minutes) for flushing with fluid, and the potential for water contamination based on location and plumbing restrictions. To minimise the creation of water hazards and reduce manual handling, an emergency shower test sock and water catchment system (such as a bucket on a trolley or a bin that can be wheeled to a disposal area) should be utilised.

Q7 Are plumbed emergency shower/eyewash units connected to the building/local area emergency alarm system?

Yes. Each time a plumbed emergency shower/eyewash unit is activated an alarm will activate and alert Security Services. A Security Officer will be despatched to check on the area.

To prevent unnecessary Security responses to a test, areas are to contact the Security Office on extension 35990 prior to the test. This will enable Security Services to isolate the alarm prior to activation.

Q8 Where can I find more information on emergency safety shower and eyewash testing?

If you require further information, contact the HSW Team