PRESENTER'S GUIDE

"SAFETY SHOWERS AND EYE WASHES IN THE LABORATORY"

Part of the Laboratory Safety Series

Quality Safety and Health Products, for Today... and Tomorrow

OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **No one wants to be in an accident. To prevent them we:**
  - Wear personal protective equipment.
  - Select apparatus carefully.

- **But, in spite of our precautions, accidents sometimes happen.**
  - Quick action is imperative.
  - A safety shower or eye wash can be very important.

- **There are many types of safety showers and eye washes.**
  - The best activate the water with one step.
  - Water then continues to flow until it is turned off.

- **Safety showers should have a strong enough flow to immediately drench the victim.**
  - They should also provide enough water for fifteen minutes of use.

- **Eye washes should produce a soft stream or spray.**
  - Often this is aerated.
  - The water should also last for at least fifteen minutes.

- **Showers/eye washes should be located wherever corrosives or other hazardous substances exist.**
  - These chemicals can cause severe damage to skin and eyes.

- **Corrosives include:**
  - Strong acids.
  - Strong bases.
  - Dehydrating agents.
  - Oxidizing agents.

- **Specific examples of corrosives include:**
  - Sulfuric acid (causes painful, slow-healing burns).
  - Potassium hydroxide (can inflict severe damage to the eyes).

- **Always take the proper steps to avoid corrosives' effects.**
  - Wear personal protective equipment.
  - Plan in advance for emergencies.
  - Read Safety Data Sheets before starting work.
  - Review your facility's Chemical Hygiene Plan.

- **You should know the locations of safety showers/eye washes, and how to use them.**
  - You should be able to find them with your eyes closed.

- **Be ready to assist coworkers in the event of trouble.**
  - You could save someone's eyesight or even their life.

- **It is important to make it easy to reach showers/eye washes.**
  - Keep routes free of equipment/supplies.
  - Keep areas under showers clear.

- **Shower and eye wash equipment should be routinely tested.**
  - Put together a schedule.
  - Mark the dates and results of testing on a tag.
  - Contact your supervisor if any problems.

- **If you are splashed by a hazardous substance, take the following steps:**
  - Do not panic.
  - Call out for help.
  - Get to a shower or eye wash immediately (depending on the incident).

- **If you are helping a victim, take charge.**
  - The incident may require "helpers".
  - Make sure the victim is completely drenched.
  - Remove personal protective equipment.
  - Completely soak their clothes, then remove them (at least down to underwear).
  - Remove their shoes.

- **Shower water is normally cold.**
  - Treatment may be necessary for hypothermia.

- **"Waste" water from showers/eye washes should be surrounded with absorbent material.**
  - This will prevent the spread of contamination.

- **After the initial deluge, the victim can be taken to an alternate area, for further decontamination.**
  - Remove their remaining clothing.
  - Then complete the showering process.
  - The entire showering time should be no less than fifteen minutes.

- **"Helpers" will also probably be wet.**
  - They may also need to be decontaminated.
  - Hypothermia may be a consideration.

- **In certain situations, shower water and clothing may need to be disposed of as hazardous waste.**
  - The shower may drain into a sewer.
  - Outside agencies may need to be notified about contamination.

- **For showers that contain drains, some water should always be kept in the trap.**
  - This keeps sewer gases from rising into the room.

- **If a chemical splash is constrained to the eye area, you should use an eye wash.**
  - It should provide continuous, gentle stream of water.

- **Get to the eye wash as quickly as possible.**
  - Hold the eye open with your fingers.
  - Rinse completely, under and behind the eyelid.

- **If only one eye was splashed, don't contaminate the other eye with residual water.**
  - Drench the contaminated eye for at least fifteen minutes.

- **Many portable eye wash units do not supply fifteen minutes of water.**
  - Use these only for an initial wash.
  - Follow up with a fifteen minute rinse.

- **Small eye wash bottles don't provide adequate rinsing.**
  - Only use them when nothing else is available.

- **Handheld "drench hoses" require constant hand pressure to operate.**
  - They don't free up both hands for manipulating the eye.
  - Because of this they are not approved as eye washes.

- **If you have been the victim of a splash accident:**
  - Seek medical attention.
  - Report it to your supervisor.

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **Be prepared to act in an emergency.**

- **Know safety shower and eye wash locations.**

- **Know how to use them.**

- **This knowledge can prevent serious injuries.**