

First Aid for Eyes

First aiders are often asked to deal with eye injuries – mostly due to dust in the eye. Less commonly they will have to deal with more serious injuries such as burns, chemical splashes and embedded objects such as shards of glass or metal.

Treatment

If you suspect an injury to the eye sit the casualty down, reassure them and follow the procedures below:

Wear medical gloves if at all possible.

Dust or dirt

Small particles of dust or dirt should be removed by sterile eyewash or mains water. Make sure that you wash the water away from the good eye.

Serious Eye Injury

Place a soft dressing over the eye and ask the casualty to hold it gently in place

Ask the casualty to close their good eye. This will ensure that they are less likely to move the injured eye and cause more injury.

Take the casualty to hospital or call 999/112

Chemical Splashes

Irrigate the eye as before with plenty of mains or sterile water. Ensure that the water runs away from the good eye so that it does not get contaminated by the chemical.

Call 999/112 for help

Burns to the Eye

This can be caused for example by welding equipment or the sun. It may feel painful and/or gritty.

Get the casualty to close their eyes and reassure them. Call 999/112 or take the casualty to hospital.

NEVER:

Try to remove an object from the eye

Touch or rub an injured eye

What is my Responsibility Towards my Employees?

Most eye injuries can be prevented by wearing safety equipment such as safety glasses, however, it is important to have the correct first aid equipment to hand.

The Health and Safety Executive give guidance to companies in their 1981 regulations:

“If mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, at least one litre of sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9% w/v) in sealed, disposable containers should be provided. Once the seal has been broken, containers should not be kept for reuse. Containers should not be used beyond their expiry date.”

Employers have a responsibility to ensure that they have first aiders with appropriate training.

They should ensure that the eyewash is easily accessible.

Eyewash Stations

An ideal way to ensure that you meet this obligation is to purchase one of our handy “Grab and Go” eyewash stations. The eyewash stations are in a stylish box in durable polypropylene, safety clips and an integrated handle, and can be wall mounted with an integrated bracket. Our kits contain sterile eyewash which meets the requirements of the HSE.

<https://bostockhealthcare.com/eyecare/kits-stations-brackets>