

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C059: First Aid for Eye Injuries

Introduction: The eyes are a vital yet extremely sensitive and delicate organ. An eye injury can be unbelievably painful; however, the pain pales in comparison to loss of sight due to an accident. It requires only a spark, a tiny piece of metal, or a splash of chemical to cause a serious eye injury.

Wearing proper eye or face protection will minimize the chance of eye injuries. If however, you do injure your eye, first aid treatment should be done with extreme care in order to prevent infection or further damage to the eye. Furthermore, professional medical attention should always be sought following an eye injury.

Burns:

- **To treat burns to the eyelid**, wash the area with a sterile solution and then apply an antibiotic ointment or a strip of gauze saturated with petroleum jelly.
- **To treat a chemical burn** to the eye, use an eyewash station for 15 minutes. Keeping the eye open for flushing may be difficult, but it is necessary. If an eyewash station is not available flush the injured eye immediately and thoroughly with clean water. The longer a chemical remains in the eye, the more severe the burn to the eye tissue.
- **For any burns** to the eye or area of the eye seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

If an eyewash station is not available, flush the injured eye immediately and thoroughly with clean water. The longer a chemical remains in the eye, the more severe the burn to the eye tissue.

Blunt Impact Injuries: A blunt impact injury forces the eye back into its socket, possibly damaging the structures at the front (the eyelid, cornea, and lens) or at the back of the eye (retina, nerves). A severe impact may also break the bones around the eye.

- **Blood leaking** into the tissue around the eye from an impact injury causes a bruise (a black eye). If a blood vessel on the surface of the eye breaks the eye will turn red (such bleeding is usually minor). Initially ice packs may help reduce the swelling and pain of a black eye, and by the second day warm compresses can help the body absorb the excess blood that has accumulated.
- **Damage to the inside** of the eye is often more serious. Any internal damage to the eye requires the immediate attention of a physician.
- **If the skin** around the eye has been cut it may require stitches.

Foreign objects: While dirt or dust in the eye is an irritant, it generally does not cause damage. Generally such irritants will cause the eyes to water and the irritant should gather in the tear ducts.

- **Gently flush** with clean or sterile water. As you flush, roll the eyeball while lifting the eyelid. Any foreign object in the eye must be removed or it may cause damage to the surface by scratching, abrading, or lacerating the eye. If a foreign object is not easily washed out, seek professional medical care.
- **If a foreign object** has pierced the eye, an ophthalmologist must be consulted immediately for emergency treatment.

Conclusion: Take special care to resist the temptation to rub the eyes when irritated; this may cause the irritant to scratch and/or damage the cornea. Inspect your eyewash station frequently to make sure that the station is sanitary and in proper working condition. If working in the field or an area where an eyewash station is not readily available, make sure your first aid kit has an eyewash bottle. Educate yourself as to the proper use and application of the eyewash.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.