



Space Matters: Eyewashes for Facilities with Limited Space

Picture this: You're on a manufacturing floor the length of four city blocks. Overhead, cranes haul loads of hot-rolled steel into the plant, where they will be fed through a series of lumbering machines until they emerge cold-drawn in their final shape.

The environment is filled with chemicals, oils and metal fragments. Despite requirements for safety glasses, the risk of eye injury remains high. Fortunately, there's plenty of space to install a wall-mounted or countertop eyewash station. There's even room for an emergency shower to be tucked out of the way.

Now consider your average restaurant dish room during a peak weekend rush. There are dishes piled high, racks of drying pots pushed into every nook – and a range of chemicals to sanitize and disinfect everything before its next use.

Unlike the luxurious and serene environment that customers see, the dish room of this restaurant is cramped and chaotic. There's no space to spare for an eyewash station because clean dishes are stacked on every available countertop. Even if you mounted an eyewash station to the wall, it's likely someone would push a rack of dishes in front of it during their rush. In the panic of an emergency, someone needing that eyewash station would struggle to remember where it was – much less be able to push those dish racks out of the way.

It's for exactly those scenarios that Speakman designed dual-function combination faucets. This innovation provides for an eyewash that has a dedicated tepid water supply to be connected to a fully functional faucet that can be used for everything from

washing hands to cleaning dishes. Best of all, both applications drain directly into the existing sink.

There even is an option for a combination eyewash that works with a commercial mop sink faucet. This unique solution provides an eyewash even in spaces where a janitorial mop sink is the only place one will fit. Again, independent water lines ensure safe protection and are found in the Speakman SEF1800 and SEF-9000 Eyesaver product series.

This new design is becoming widely accepted, with the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials classifying these products as commercial faucets with an integral emergency eyewash. That organization provides general, testing and marking requirements for dual-function eyewashes, among others.

These specialty faucets can come in a range of designs, from a traditional eight-inch, widespread laboratory application to more advanced sensor-activated designs. That's exactly what you'll find from the Speakman line of combination eyewash faucets.

These models feature two great products in one, equipped with patented dual waterways that allow the faucet and eyewash to be used independently of one another. They come in standard or eight-inch spouts for varying sink sizes and will always be tepid water-ready with the installation of a Speakman thermostatic mixing valve.

Made from low-lead brass construction, the swivel spout positions up to 100 degrees with a lift-handle activation for eyewash. The eyewash operates at 1.9 GPM at 30 PSI and sensor models can be either battery- or AC-powered.

There are plenty of considerations and regulations surrounding eyewashes and emergency showers. At minimum, OSHA requires they be installed within the work area for immediate emergency use. Beyond that, industry standards suggest locating them within a 10-second walk, or about 55 feet, from the potential hazard. Dual-function combination faucets usually fit within those guidelines when installed on an existing sink. There's also no concern about it being blocked by a piece of equipment or a stray dish rack.

Another eyewash requirement calls for it to consistently deliver a tepid stream of water at anywhere between 60 F and 100 F. With Speakman's patented design, the water delivered through the eyewash comes through a stream separate from the primary faucet. That means you can be washing dishes with hot water through the faucet and still be assured that tepid water will come from the eyewash spout.

Emergency showers, meanwhile, have a few more options for out-of-the-way placement. Some models have the showerheads flush-mounted in the ceiling above an open space. Its activation mechanism can be tucked away in recessed wall panels or by using a pull chain out of the typical path of travel.

Beyond a dish room, there are plenty of other facilities that would benefit from a dual-waterway eyewash. Consider a research laboratory, where acids and bases are aplenty, but beakers and test tubes take over every bit of counter or wall space. Using a counter-mounted eyewash runs the risk that the activation motion would cause nearby beakers to break, creating yet another hazard when someone has to maneuver around glass or debris on the floor.

Also, think of the butcher or deli in your local grocery store. Employees work with heavy-duty cleaners and sanitizers but are limited on space as they are surrounded with cutting tables, prep tables, ovens and other equipment. That's also the case for the photo counter at your local pharmacy. Processing chemicals could be a danger, but these small stores don't have much real estate for a designated eyewash.

Many of these chemicals, especially when in a concentrated form, require that anyone who comes in contact with it immediately rinse or wash for 15 minutes. It's unreasonable for someone to do that at an eyewash located in a typical traffic path or while standing between stacks of inventory.

All of this is not to suggest that every business needs a shower or eyewash on site. Both OSHA and ANSI offer instruction that helps you determine whether your facility requires an emergency shower or eyewash. OSHA requires them in situations where someone could be exposed to dangerous corrosive materials and ANSI says it's when there is a compound onsite that could have adverse health effects.

Nevada's OSHA recently clarified that for facilities within the state. There, employers are required to review all Safety Data Sheets and chemical labels for any chemical entering the workplace. An emergency eyewash or shower is required anytime there is one that falls under the SDS hazard category for skin corrosion and irritation. Chemicals that have that rating are either listed as Category One or use the SDS signal phrase: DANGER – Highly Corrosive Substances.

If there is ever doubt if shower or eyewash protection is required for a particular chemical or material, a safety professional should be consulted. Speakman, meanwhile, is available to help determine the right eyewash setup for any facility and will ensure compliance to performance standards.

The health and well-being of employees is worth it.

For more than 150 years, Speakman has been manufacturing fashion plumbing and safety showers for the hospitality, multi-unit residential and healthcare industries. Now part of Marcone Plumbing, Speakman continues to be known for exceptional quality and innovative performance, with a reputation as a leading provider of premium plumbing solutions. Learn more about Speakman and its unique eyewash solutions by visiting speakman.com or contacting leads@speakman.com.

