



# Eye protection in the veterinary setting

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## Trainer's overview

Refer to the suggestions below to help your employees get the most out of their training sessions.

- Conduct the training sessions in a relatively quiet and uninterrupted environment.
- Keep the sessions for the same time and day of the month (e.g., 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday).
- Give out employee handouts along with pencils/pens.
- Review the trainer's guide, employee handout, and any references.
- Keep the sessions to a maximum of 20 minutes.
- Include personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked well for you.
- Ask all employees who attend to sign the Safety Training Sign-in Sheet for documentation purposes.
- Conduct a second training session for employees who were unable to attend the first session.

Common eye injuries typically result from grit or other particulate matter, biologic or chemical liquids, animal bodily fluids, and even laser contact. The resulting injuries can range from irritation to temporary or permanent blindness.

## Trainer's guide

### Regulations

- The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) has regulations equivalent to Federal OSHA that mandate employers to conduct a hazard assessment to determine what personal protective equipment is required to protect employees by either specific task or location; also a non-mandatory appendix that helps with the process is available: [www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3380.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3380.html)  
[www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3380a.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3380a.html)
- Cal/OSHA has regulations specifically for eye protection. Depending upon the hazard found during the above hazard assessment, certain types of eye protection would be mandated. Information on requirements also includes exposure to lasers: [www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3382.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3382.html)
- Cal/OSHA has regulations on emergency eyewash and shower equipment that includes information on location and maintenance: [www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5162.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5162.html)

### Postings

- None specifically required. However, if there are areas where eye protection is required, many employers will post signs stating "eye protection required" in such areas.

### Reference

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention — Eye Safety: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/eye/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/eye/)
- Hospital eTool — Use of Medical Lasers Federal OSHA: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/surgical/lasers.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/surgical/lasers.html)
- Federal OSHA Technical Manual on Laser Hazards: [www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm\\_iii/otm\\_iii\\_6.html](http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_6.html)
- American National Standards Institute Z136.3 Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care: <https://www.lia.org/store/laser-safety-standards/z136-standards>
- Federal OSHAs equivalent standards are:
- PPE: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.132>
- Eye Protection: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.133>

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# Eye protection in the veterinary setting

*Basic safety glasses for impact and foreign body entry protection*



*Indirectly vented safety goggles for splash protection*



Wavelength filtering safety glasses for laser protection



## Background

Common eye injuries, and diseases typically result from grit or other particulate matter, splashes of chemical or biological liquids, or animal bodily fluids, and from laser exposure. The resulting injuries and diseases can range from irritation to temporary or permanent blindness to life-threatening illnesses, such as avian influenza. These different causes often necessitate different eye protection requirements.

- **Foreign body in eye (FBO):** The most commonly occurring eye injury is from a foreign body in the eye as a result of grooming, trimming toe nails, or even the wind while exercising an animal. As solid matter, FBO can cause injuries as a projectile, scrape, or irritation. Eye protection for FBO will vary depending on the potential hazard. The eye protection could vary from regular safety glasses to goggles.
- **Splashing of liquids:** The second major cause of eye injuries is splashing of liquids and fluids into the eye. This can occur while cleaning surfaces or instruments and spraying, wiping, pouring, administering, or transferring chemicals and medicines. Animal bodily fluids and spray from contaminated water during dental procedures are also common sources of eye injury or disease from liquids.  
Eye protection for liquid splashes could vary from chemical splash goggles to face shields with chemical splash goggles underneath, depending on the hazard.

- **Lasers:** An increasing number of veterinary practices are using laser technology. Lasers have many advantages as an effective modality for pain management and injury healing. Laser safety is essential, as the laser beams produced have the potential to cause biological damage to the eye or skin. Exposure to direct or diffused laser light can be experienced by the lens of the eye.

Eye protection will depend on the wavelength of the laser to be protected from. The laser safety eyewear will be marked with the appropriate laser wavelength, optical density, and visible light transmission. Normal sunglasses do not provide adequate protection.

## Safety tips

- Conduct a hazard assessment for all personal protective equipment — especially eye protection. From that hazard assessment, you can determine which type of eye protection is required for the hazard in each area.
- Eye protection must fit properly and be comfortable, or your employees may not wear it.
- It is estimated that 90% of eye injuries could have easily been avoided by using the proper personal protective equipment.\*
- Some eye injuries can potentially result in blindness.
- Foreign bodies in the eye are the most common eye injury. They can come from any number of sources from dust and dirt to flying toe nails.
- Safety glasses have specifically designed frames and lenses to protect against eye injuries and illnesses.

\*"Eye Injuries at Work," published February 22, 2016, American Academy of Ophthalmology.

# Eye protection in the veterinary setting

## Trainer's guide (continued)



### Safety tips (continued)

- Surgical lasers are fairly common and can cause extremely serious eye injuries.
- Protection from laser light can be provided by the correct eye protection for the wavelength of the laser. Note that sunglasses will not provide adequate protection.
- Ensure that all employees know where the emergency eyewash stations are located and that they are not obstructed and in good working condition. Time is of the essence when getting chemicals or contaminated liquids out of the eye.
- Know and follow the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for proper eye protection before using a particular chemical.

### Questions for discussion

**What is the best type of eye protection to protect from a splash of hazardous materials?**

Chemical splash goggles.

**What document can help you decide what type of personal protective equipment should be worn while working with a chemical?**

Safety Data Sheet (SDS)

**Why is it important to know where the emergency eyewash stations are?** Time is of the essence to get chemicals out of the eye(s).

**Please complete the sign-in sheet.**

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# Eye protection in the veterinary setting

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**Attendance record**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trainer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:**

**Signature:**

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# Eye protection in the veterinary setting

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## Employee handout



### Overview

- It is estimated that 90% of the eye injuries could have easily been avoided by using the proper personal protective equipment.\*
- Some eye injuries can potentially result in blindness. Safety glasses prevent many eye injuries.
- Foreign bodies in eye are the most common eye injury. They can come from any number of sources from dust and dirt to flying toe nails.
- Being splashed with a chemical or other liquid is the second most common eye injury. This could be from cleaning chemicals such as disinfectants or household cleaners, or from veterinary work-related liquids such as medications, contaminated water, or patient bodily fluids.
- Splash protection to the eye could include chemical splash goggles or face shields with goggles. Always wear eye protection under face shields.
- Surgical lasers are fairly common and cause extremely serious eye injuries.
- Protection from laser light can be provided by the correct filter lens density. Choose the darkest shade that allows performing the work task.
- For vision correction, safety glasses fitted with prescription lenses, or goggles that can be worn over prescription eyewear must be provided.
- Dusty and/or chemical environments may represent an additional hazard to contact lens wearers, who must also wear appropriate eye protection.
- Ensure that all employees know where the emergency eyewash stations are located and that they are not obstructed and in good working condition. Time is of the essence to get chemicals out of the eye.
- Know and follow what the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) states for proper eye protection before using a particular chemical.

\*"Eye Injuries at Work", published February 22, 2016, American Academy of Ophthalmology.

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This material is for informational purposes and is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussions or opinions be construed as medical advice. Contact your broker for insurance advice, doctor for medical advice, or legal counsel for legal advice regarding your particular situation.

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