

Did You Know?!

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There are 10 different additive solutions for killing bacteria (under NSN 6840-01-267-4346) on your Ship's Hazardous Material List (SHML); they ostensibly are for portable eyewash stations. They can even be found under various Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) codes.

What you probably didn't know is that none of these additives are to be used aboard any Navy ship, under any circumstances!

Understandably, this prohibition probably creates some confusion. Why can't you use them aboard ship? Here are some other frequently-asked questions and comments I get during safety surveys:

- How can we get the bacteriostatic solution for the eyewash station?
 - We used the Navy stock number on the unit so why does supply kick it back?
 - Is the water safe for use in your eyes without the additive solution?
 - No one told us that we cannot use the solution—it came in the box with the unit.
 - The safety office said, "The additive is under review," and that's the only answer they gave.
 - I used the additive solution aboard my last ship.
 - The eyewash station is empty because we don't have the solution to mix with the water.

The additive's purpose is to keep fungus from growing in stagnated water over time. If the solution has been added, water can remain unchanged for up to six months. However, the additive cannot be used because doing so would violate MIP series 6600, Q-3 periodicity requirements, which specify when to drain, flush, and refill the unit.

If not useable, why are the additives still in the box when a new unit is received aboard ship? It's because Navy ships are not the only ones using the units. These eyewash units are also used ashore, by other Department of Defense agencies and by commercial companies that don't have the same prohibitions as afloat units.



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Meanwhile, the water is quite safe without the additives, because they have nothing to do with water purification.

As a final note: There are two other important reasons why the concentrated powder additive is prohibited aboard ship. The first is that when mixing the solution and then adding it to the eyewash station, Navy Occupation, Safety and Health (NavOSH) requirements require using local exhaust to vent where you mix and pour the solution. Protective clothing—including an approved respirator for toxic dust—also must be worn when mixing the solution. Second, the concentrated powder is an explosion hazard. Should the powder ignite, it will generate carbon monoxide, phenol, and possibly other toxic gases. ☹

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