



Fact Sheet: Emergency Lighting - Test Regimes

A frequent question we receive at SRM concerns emergency lighting requirements and the testing regimes which should be in place. Some clients are concerned they are not doing enough to ensure compliance whilst others wonder if they are going over and above what is required. To help provide a degree of clarification as regards these issues we have decided to put together a short reference guide which summarises current guidance in this area.

Regular servicing and periodic maintenance of emergency lighting systems is essential. The occupier/owner of a building must employ a competent person to supervise the servicing of the system. In most cases outside contractors are used to maintain the emergency lighting on their behalf. However it has become apparent that in some cases contractors are still insisting on testing regimes that were a requirement of the previous BS5266 Part 1 – 1999 but which are no longer required under current guidelines. For example, 6 monthly tests are no longer required under BS5266 Part 8, 2004. This has led to many Responsible Persons (RPs) paying out unnecessarily for testing of their emergency lighting. The monthly tests can be carried out by a ‘competent person’ employed by the company leaving only the annual periodic inspection/discharge test to be undertaken by a contractor. The frequency of the testing could also be agreed through risk assessment.

The Legal Bit

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, article 17 details the Responsible Persons duty on maintenance:

17. — (1) Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons the responsible person must ensure that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of the premises under this Order or, subject to paragraph (6), under any other enactment, including any enactment repealed or revoked by this Order, are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

Emergency lighting falls under this article as its function is to indicate clearly a means of escape, provide illumination along such routes to allow safe egress through escape routes and exits provided and to ensure fire alarm points, extinguishers etc. provided can be readily located.

British Standard BS5266 is the official guidance document in regards to emergency lighting with Part 1, 2011 and Part 8, 2004 dealing with maintenance and servicing.

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Below is a summary of the guidance regarding the testing of emergency lighting - BS5266 Part 8, 2004. The British Standard is not a legal requirement in itself; however it provides a benchmark from which the fire authorities and other enforcing authorities can work. In order to demonstrate compliance and 'due diligence' alternative testing arrangements can be put in place so long as they are equivalent to or better than those outlined under the British Standard concerned.

Practical Guidance on Testing Emergency Lighting From BS5266 Part 8, 2004

Daily

Indicators of central power supply should be visually inspected for correct operation.

NOTE ; This is a visual inspection of indicators to identify that the system is in a ready condition and does not require a test of operation Sometimes this is impractical at unmanned sites; site specific requirements should be detailed in the fire risk assessment.

Monthly

If automatic testing devices are used, the results of the short duration tests need to be recorded. For all other systems tests need to be carried out as follows:

- a) All luminaires and internally illuminated exit signs should be switched on in emergency mode using their batteries by simulating a failure of the supply to the normal lighting for a period sufficient to ensure that each lamp is illuminated.
During this period, all luminaires and signs should be checked to ensure that they are present, clean and functioning correctly. At the end of this test period, the supply to the normal lighting should be restored and any indicator lamps or devices checked to ensure that they are showing that the normal supply has been restored.
- b) In addition to a), for central battery systems, the correct operation of system monitors should be checked.
- c) In addition to a), for generating sets, refer to the requirement of ISO 8528-12.

NOTE: The period of simulated failure should be sufficient for the purpose of testing whilst at the same time minimising damage to the system components e.g. lamps. Testing involves a 'flick' test and inspection of each emergency lighting unit. Where there are a large number of units, this could be split into sections on a rotational basis; the fire risk assessment should detail site specific requirements.

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Annually

If automatic testing devices are used, the results of the full rated duration test should be recorded. For all other systems the monthly inspection should be carried out and the following additional tests made:

- a) Each luminaire and internally illuminated sign should be tested for its full rated duration in accordance with the manufacturer's information.
- b) The supply of the normal lighting should be restored and any indicator lamp or device checked to ensure that it is showing that normal supply has been restored. The charging arrangements should be checked for proper functioning.
- c) The date of the test and its results should be recorded in the system logbook.
- d) In addition, for generating sets, refer to the requirements of ISO -12.

Where emergency lighting is being newly installed, the Occupier/Owner should ensure a completion certificate is obtained to demonstrate the system is installed in line with the requirements of BS5266, Part1, 2011.

Please contact Strategic Risk Management if you require further assistance on this issue or to conduct a fire risk assessment of your premises that will include assessing that appropriate testing regimes are in place. Alternatively further information can be found on our website www.srmukgroup.com

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