



13. Fire - Detection & Alarm Systems - Detection & Alarm Systems Weekly Call Point Testing

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Detection & Alarm Systems
Frequency:	Weekly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Core
Commonality:	Common

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your weekly testing of fire alarm call points ensures that this critical activation method remains reliable and familiar to staff and pupils. By systematically testing different call points each week, you maintain the system's integrity and build confidence in emergency procedures. Your consistent attention to this essential safety check protects everyone in the educational environment by ensuring alarms can be raised quickly when needed.

Task Summary

Statutory: Weekly fire alarm tests must be carried out using a different manual call point each week, with the alarm sounding confirmed across the site. This routine testing involves activating a designated call point, verifying that the alarm activates correctly, checking sound levels in different areas, and ensuring the system can be properly reset. This ensures the system works and helps staff and pupils become familiar with alarm signals during term time. The testing also identifies any faults that might prevent alarm activation. Regular testing provides assurance that any fault is detected promptly between contractor visits. Evidence produced includes logbook entries showing the date of testing, specific call point tested, staff member conducting the test, and confirmation that the alarm functioned correctly.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires regular testing of fire alarm systems
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on fire alarm testing requirements
- **British Standard BS 5839: Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings:** Specifies requirements for manual call point testing
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on routine testing procedures
- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (for independent schools): Requires regular testing of fire safety systems

Typical Frequency

The fire alarm system must be tested weekly using a different manual call point each time, with this routine testing continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings, weekly testing is essential for maintaining system reliability and familiarising occupants with alarm sounds. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring the system remains operational.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments with manual call points on their fire alarm systems, which is common in virtually all schools and colleges. It is a core statutory task essential for ensuring reliable manual alarm activation in occupied buildings. The task applies to all premises with fire alarm systems featuring manual call points.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Competent Person
- **In-House Requirements:** This task can be completed by trained facilities staff or designated fire safety officers who have received appropriate training in fire alarm testing procedures. Staff should be familiar with the alarm system and emergency procedures.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required for this testing task.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally completed in-house by trained staff to ensure regular testing and familiarity with procedures.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during quiet periods to avoid unnecessary disruption
- **Cost implications:** Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional staff training
- **Resource requirements:** Access to call points and alarm control panel
- **Potential disruption:** Brief alarm activation may disturb nearby activities
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Test results should be recorded in the fire logbook

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure tester is familiar with the alarm system and testing procedures
- Confirm emergency procedures are in place during testing
- Check that the designated call point is accessible and not damaged
- Inform nearby staff about impending test

Tools & Materials

- Fire alarm logbook for recording test results
- Keys or access codes for call point activation
- Pen for recording test details
- System documentation showing call point locations

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Preparation

1. Identify the call point designated for this week's test
2. Review previous test results for any recurring issues
3. Ensure test area is clear of vulnerable individuals
4. Prepare to record test details in the logbook

Phase B: Test Execution

1. Activate the designated manual call point
2. Observe alarm activation and sounder operation
3. Check alarm coverage in different building areas
4. Verify system can be silenced and reset correctly

5. Confirm no faults are indicated on the control panel

Phase C: Documentation

1. Record test date, time, and call point location
2. Note staff member conducting the test
3. Document alarm activation and sound coverage
4. Record any issues or unusual observations
5. Sign and date the logbook entry

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Alarm must activate within 10 seconds of call point operation
- Sound levels must be audible throughout the tested areas
- System must silence and reset correctly after testing
- No faults should be indicated during or after testing

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Immediately investigate any failure to activate or poor sound coverage. Escalate system faults to facilities management and arrange urgent contractor attention. Implement alternative alarm procedures until system is repaired.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Reset the alarm system to normal operation. Ensure the call point cover is properly replaced.

Completion Checks

Verify that the logbook entry is complete with all required details. Confirm that the test was conducted using the correct call point. Ensure any issues are clearly documented for follow-up.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** Weekly logbook entries must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Detailed test records with observations support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Testing the same call point repeatedly, not checking sound coverage in all areas, or failing to record test results properly
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain a systematic rotation schedule for call points, conduct tests at consistent times, and train multiple staff members to perform testing
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Coordinate tests with lesson changes to minimise disruption, use testing as a teaching opportunity about fire safety, and maintain a visible testing schedule for staff awareness
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Call points that don't activate reliably, areas with poor sound coverage, or frequent system faults during testing

Quick Reference Checklist

- Designated call point identified for testing
- Test preparation completed
- Call point activated and alarm response observed
- Sound coverage checked in different areas
- System silenced and reset correctly
- Test details recorded in logbook
- Any issues documented for follow-up
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

This task is not normally grouped with other tasks.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Detection & Alarm Systems - Detection & Alarm Systems Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Detection & Alarm Systems - Detection & Alarm Systems Quarterly Test & Service

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