20. Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hydrants Full Service & Inspection

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Extinguishing Equipment
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Approved Contractor
Priority:	Core
Commonality:	Occasional

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

Why This Task Matters

Your commitment to maintaining fire hydrants ensures that emergency services have immediate access to reliable water supplies during firefighting operations. By ensuring these critical connection points function correctly on school and college grounds, you support rapid response that can prevent fire spread between buildings. Your expertise in overseeing these essential firefighting infrastructure components demonstrates your vital role in community safety coordination.

Task Summary

Statutory: Fire hydrants on site must be fully serviced and inspected annually by an approved contractor to ensure correct water flow, pressure, and access. This comprehensive maintenance involves checking hydrant operation, testing water flow and pressure, inspecting accessibility, and verifying compliance with standards. The service includes functional testing of valves, checking marker posts and signs, testing flow rates, and inspecting for damage or obstructions. This guarantees that in the event of a fire, fire crews can connect safely and quickly to a reliable water supply. For colleges and large school campuses with external hydrants, this is vital to protect spread between multiple blocks. The inspection includes checking for vandalism, corrosion, and accessibility issues. Evidence produced includes the contractor's inspection certificate confirming compliance and

functionality, flow/pressure test report documenting all measurements and performance data, and any recommendations for maintenance or access improvements.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**: Requires fire hydrants to be maintained for firefighting access
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses)**: Provides guidance on fire hydrant maintenance
- **British Standard BS 9990: Non-automatic firefighting systems**: Specifies requirements for fire hydrant maintenance and testing
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice**: Includes guidance on fire hydrant maintenance
- **National Fire Hydrant Colour Code**: Provides standards for hydrant identification

Typical Frequency

Fire hydrants must be serviced and inspected annually where present, with this comprehensive maintenance typically scheduled during school holidays. In educational settings with fire hydrants, annual servicing is essential for ensuring reliable firefighting access. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for maintaining external firefighting infrastructure.

Applicability

This task applies to educational establishments that have fire hydrants on site, which is occasional as these are typically found on larger campuses or in urban areas. It is a core statutory task where hydrants are present, essential for providing firefighting access. The task applies to schools and colleges with external hydrant systems serving the premises.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type**: Approved Contractor
- **Contractor Requirements**: This task should be carried out by a competent fire hydrant maintenance company with specialist knowledge of water systems and flow testing. Contractors should be familiar with local water authority requirements. Typical cost range: £150-£400 per hydrant depending on location and testing requirements.
- **Permit to Work**: May require coordination with local water authority for flow testing.
- **Delivery Model**: Normally contractor-delivered due to the specialist testing equipment and technical knowledge required for flow testing.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations**: Schedule during school holidays to allow for testing and any repairs
- **Cost implications**: Budget £150-£400 per hydrant annually for professional servicing and testing
- **Resource requirements**: Allow access to hydrant locations and coordination with water authority
- **Potential disruption**: May require temporary road closures during flow testing
- **Risk assessment requirements**: Service findings should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure the contractor has expertise in fire hydrant systems
- Provide access to hydrant locations and system documentation
- Confirm coordination with local water authority for testing
- Arrange for safe testing conditions and traffic management

Tools & Materials

- Hydrant inventory and location records
- Flow testing equipment and pressure gauges
- Replacement components and markers
- Traffic management equipment for road testing
- Safety equipment for working near roads

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Service Assessment

1. Review hydrant inventory and previous service records
2. Identify all hydrant locations and access requirements
3. Coordinate with water authority for flow testing permissions
4. Prepare testing schedule and safety procedures

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Inspect hydrants for damage, corrosion, or vandalism
2. Check marker posts, signs, and identification

3. Examine access routes and clearances
4. Verify hydrant box security and condition
5. Assess surrounding area for obstructions

Phase C: Functional Testing

1. Test hydrant valve operation and sealing
2. Conduct flow testing through approved connections
3. Measure water pressure and flow rates
4. Check for leaks or pressure loss
5. Verify connection compatibility with firefighting equipment

Phase D: Maintenance and Servicing

1. Lubricate valves and moving parts
2. Replace damaged markers or signs
3. Clear obstructions and improve access
4. Repair minor damage to hydrant bodies

Phase E: Documentation and Certification

1. Document all test results and measurements
2. Prepare flow/pressure test report
3. Issue inspection certificate confirming compliance
4. Recommend maintenance schedule and access improvements

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Flow rate must meet minimum requirements for firefighting (typically 1,250 litres/minute)
- Water pressure must be adequate for firefighting operations
- Valve operation must be smooth and leak-free
- Access routes must be clear and unobstructed

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 mark faulty hydrants as out of service. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent repairs. Coordinate with fire service about alternative water sources.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Restore hydrants to service and remove any temporary signage. Ensure access routes are clear and markers are visible.

Completion Checks

Verify that all hydrants have been inspected and tested. Confirm that the inspection certificate confirms system compliance. Ensure the flow/pressure report documents all measurements.

Client Oversight Checklist (Before the Visit)

- Confirm contractor's expertise in hydrant systems
- Provide hydrant inventory and location details
- Arrange coordination with water authority
- Schedule during period when testing disruption is minimised

Client Oversight Checklist (During the Visit)

- Observe inspection of hydrant condition and access
- Ensure comprehensive flow and pressure testing
- Verify that faulty components are identified and repaired
- Confirm detailed documentation of test results

Deliverables & Acceptance Criteria (After the Visit)

- Receive inspection certificate confirming hydrant compliance
- Review flow/pressure test report with measurements
- Ensure recommendations for maintenance are specific and prioritised
- Confirm that all documentation is complete and accurate

Defects & Follow-up

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Prioritise repairs to maintain firefighting capability. Agree timescales for component replacement. Schedule re-testing after major repairs.

Reinstatement & Sign-off

Confirm hydrants are operational and properly marked. Complete final sign-off once all documentation is received.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process**: Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence**: Contractor's inspection certificate and flow/pressure test report must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence**: Performance measurements and maintenance recommendations support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid**: Not conducting flow testing, missing access obstructions, or failing to coordinate with water authority
- **Best practices for efficient completion**: Maintain detailed hydrant inventory, conduct pre-service visual checks, and coordinate with grounds maintenance
- **Pro tips for educational settings**: Use servicing visits to review emergency access routes, educate staff about hydrant locations, and maintain clear access during landscaping work
- **Warning signs that indicate problems**: Vandalism damage, overgrown access routes, or low flow rates

Quick Reference Checklist

- Hydrant inventory and locations reviewed
- All hydrants visually inspected
- Valve operation and condition tested
- Flow testing and pressure verification completed
- Access routes and markers checked
- Maintenance and repairs completed
- Inspection certificate and test report received
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Portable Fire Extinguishers Full Service & Inspection

- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hose Reels Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Shutters & Curtains Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Sprinkler Systems Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Suppression Systems Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Smoke Vents & AOVs Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Dry & Wet Risers Full Service & Inspection

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