



25. Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Suppression Systems Visual Check

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Extinguishing Equipment
Frequency:	Monthly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Competent Person
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 monthly visual checks of fire suppression systems ensure that these critical protective systems remain intact and ready for automatic activation. By conducting these regular inspections in educational catering kitchens or server rooms, you maintain confidence that specialised extinguishing agents will deploy correctly when needed. Your vigilant monitoring of these sophisticated safety systems demonstrates your essential role in maintaining continuous fire protection.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly visual checks confirm suppression system indicators, cylinders, and controls are intact and unobstructed. This routine inspection involves checking pressure gauges, verifying indicator lights, inspecting for damage or tampering, and ensuring clear access to equipment. In educational catering kitchens or server rooms, suppression systems are critical to preventing small fires escalating rapidly. Simple in-house checks provide confidence that systems are ready until the next full service. The inspection includes documenting system status, checking for leaks or damage, and ensuring all indicators show normal operation. Evidence produced includes monthly inspection logbook entries documenting all checks performed and observations, annotated photos showing system components and indicator status, and any issues identified with immediate actions taken.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires regular inspection of fire suppression systems
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on suppression system inspection
- **British Standard BS 5306: Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises:** Specifies requirements for suppression system inspection
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on routine inspection procedures
- **EN 15004: Fixed firefighting systems - Gas extinguishing systems:** Provides standards for gaseous suppression systems

Typical Frequency

Fire suppression systems must be visually checked monthly, with these routine inspections continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings with suppression systems, monthly checks are essential for maintaining system readiness. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring specialised fire suppression systems remain operational.

Applicability

This task applies to educational establishments that have fire suppression systems installed, which is occasional as these systems are typically found in specific high-risk areas. It is a core statutory task where suppression systems are present, essential for maintaining automatic fire suppression capability. The task applies to schools and colleges with suppression systems in kitchens, server rooms, laboratories, or other high-risk areas.

Responsible Persons

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

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during term time to maintain continuous system monitoring
- **Cost implications:** Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional staff training
- **Resource requirements:** Access to system components and control panels
- **Potential disruption:** Minimal disruption as this is primarily a visual inspection
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Inspection results should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure inspector is familiar with the suppression system and normal status indicators
- Confirm access to all system components and control equipment
- Check that inspection can be conducted without interfering with system operation
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- System documentation and normal status indicators
- Inspection checklist and logbook
- Camera for documenting system status
- Pen for recording observations
- Personal protective equipment if required

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

1. Review previous inspection results and any outstanding issues
2. Gather system documentation and normal status information
3. Prepare inspection checklist and documentation forms
4. Confirm access to all system components

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Check pressure gauges and indicators for correct readings
2. Inspect agent containers for damage, corrosion, or tampering
3. Verify control panel displays normal status

4. Examine nozzles, piping, and distribution systems
5. Check alarm system indicators and warning signs
6. Ensure clear access to manual controls and equipment

Phase C: System Status Verification

1. Confirm all indicator lights show normal operation
2. Check for any fault or warning signals
3. Verify tamper indicators are intact
4. Inspect for signs of leaks or damage
5. Check that access panels are secure

Phase D: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document status of all indicators and components
3. Photograph system components and indicators
4. Note any issues or unusual observations
5. Sign and date the logbook entry

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Pressure gauges must show correct readings
- Indicator lights must show normal status
- No damage or tampering should be visible
- Clear access must be maintained to all components

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 isolate any damaged components and restrict access to affected areas. Escalate issues to facilities management and arrange urgent specialist attention. Implement alternative fire protection measures in affected areas.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

No reinstatement required as this is an inspection task. Ensure any access points remain secure.

Completion Checks

Verify that the logbook entry is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows system status. 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:** Monthly log entry and annotated photos must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Detailed inspection observations and photographic records support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Not checking all indicators, missing subtle damage, or failing to document observations with photographs
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain consistent inspection schedules, keep detailed records of previous checks, and train multiple staff members
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Coordinate inspections with routine maintenance, use inspection as an opportunity to review system familiarity, and maintain clear records of normal status indicators
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Abnormal pressure readings, damaged indicators, or signs of tampering

Quick Reference Checklist

- Previous inspection results reviewed
- System documentation and normal status checked
- Pressure gauges and indicators verified
- Agent containers and piping inspected
- Control panels and alarms checked
- Clear access to components confirmed
- Inspection results documented with photos
- 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 - Fire Hydrants Visual Check

- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Dry & Wet Risers Visual Check
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hose Reels Visual Check
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Portable Fire Extinguishers Monthly Visual Check

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Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.