26. Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hydrants 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 hydrants ensure that emergency services can access reliable water supplies without delay during firefighting operations. By maintaining clear and unobstructed access to these critical connection points, you support rapid response that can prevent fire spread between buildings. Your consistent monitoring of these essential firefighting infrastructure components demonstrates your vital role in community safety coordination.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly hydrant checks confirm hydrant covers, marker posts, and access routes are free from obstruction and damage. This routine inspection involves checking hydrant visibility, verifying access paths are clear, inspecting for damage or vandalism, and ensuring markers are intact. Ensuring hydrants are readily accessible enables fire crews to respond without delay in the event of an incident. This is especially important on school and college grounds where vehicles, bins, or vegetation may block access. The inspection includes documenting hydrant condition, checking surrounding areas, and ensuring all access requirements are met. Evidence produced includes inspection logbook entries documenting all checks performed and observations, annotated photos showing hydrant locations and access conditions, and any obstructions removed or issues identified with immediate actions taken.

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 inspection
- **British Standard BS 9990: Non-automatic firefighting systems**: Specifies requirements for fire hydrant inspection
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice**: Includes guidance on routine inspection procedures
- **National Fire Hydrant Colour Code**: Provides standards for hydrant identification

Typical Frequency

Fire hydrants must be visually checked monthly where present, with these routine inspections continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings with fire hydrants, monthly checks are essential for maintaining firefighting access. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring external firefighting infrastructure remains accessible.

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**: Competent Person
- **In-House Requirements**: This task can be completed by trained facilities staff or grounds maintenance personnel who have received appropriate training in fire hydrant inspection. Staff should be familiar with hydrant locations and access requirements.
- **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 site.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations**: Schedule during term time to maintain continuous monitoring
- **Cost implications**: Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional staff

training

- **Resource requirements**: Access to hydrant locations and grounds areas
- **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 hydrant locations and normal appearance
- Confirm access to all hydrant locations and surrounding areas
- Check that inspection can be conducted safely in external environments
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- Hydrant location records and inspection checklist
- Logbook for recording inspection results
- Camera for documenting hydrant condition
- Pen for recording observations
- Basic tools for clearing minor obstructions if needed

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

1. Review previous inspection results and any outstanding issues
2. Gather hydrant location records and access information
3. Prepare inspection checklist and documentation forms
4. Confirm access to all hydrant locations

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Check hydrant covers for damage or tampering
2. Inspect marker posts and identification signs
3. Verify access routes are clear of obstructions
4. Examine hydrant bodies for damage or corrosion
5. Check surrounding areas for potential obstructions
6. Ensure visibility from access roads

Phase C: Access Verification

1. Confirm clear access paths to hydrants
2. Check for vegetation or debris blocking access
3. Verify road surfaces allow safe vehicle access
4. Ensure adequate clearance for firefighting equipment
5. Check for any temporary obstructions (vehicles, materials)

Phase D: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document condition of all hydrants and access routes
3. Photograph hydrant locations and any issues found
4. Note any obstructions removed or issues identified
5. Sign and date the logbook entry

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Hydrant covers must be intact and undamaged
- Marker posts must be visible and upright
- Access routes must be clear for at least 3 metres radius
- No obstructions should impede firefighting access

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 clear any obstructions affecting hydrant access. Escalate significant damage to facilities management and arrange urgent repairs. Coordinate with local fire service about affected hydrants.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Clear any minor obstructions found during inspection. Ensure hydrants remain accessible after inspection.

Completion Checks

Verify that the logbook entry is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows hydrant conditions. 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**: Logbook 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**: Missing hydrants in remote locations, not checking access routes thoroughly, or failing to document observations with photographs
- **Best practices for efficient completion**: Maintain consistent inspection schedules, keep detailed records of previous checks, and coordinate with grounds maintenance staff
- **Pro tips for educational settings**: Include hydrant checks in routine grounds maintenance patrols, use inspection as an opportunity to review emergency access routes, and maintain clear records of normal conditions
- **Warning signs that indicate problems**: Damaged covers, overgrown access routes, or missing markers

Quick Reference Checklist

- Previous inspection results reviewed
- Hydrant locations and access routes identified
- Hydrant covers and markers inspected
- Access routes checked for obstructions
- Surrounding areas verified clear
- Any obstructions removed immediately
- 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 Suppression Systems 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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