27. Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Dry & Wet Risers 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 dry and wet risers ensure that firefighting operations can proceed efficiently in multi-storey buildings. By maintaining accessible and intact riser systems, you support rapid intervention that protects pupils and staff in upper floors. Your regular monitoring of these critical vertical firefighting systems demonstrates your essential role in maintaining continuous firefighting capability.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly visual inspections of riser inlets and valves confirm they are accessible, intact, and free of tampering or obstruction. This routine check involves verifying inlet boxes are secure, checking valve positions, inspecting for damage or leaks, and ensuring clear access to equipment. In multi-storey education buildings, this supports emergency firefighting operations by ensuring risers are ready when crews arrive. These checks are straightforward but essential for safeguarding upper floor occupancy. The inspection includes documenting system condition, checking surrounding areas, and ensuring all access requirements are met. Evidence produced includes inspection log entries documenting all checks performed and observations, annotated photos showing riser locations and condition, and any issues identified with immediate actions taken.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**: Requires riser systems to be maintained for firefighting access
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses)**: Provides guidance on riser system inspection
- **British Standard BS 9990: Non-automatic firefighting systems**: Specifies requirements for riser inspection
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice**: Includes guidance on routine inspection procedures
- **Building Regulations 2010**: Require riser systems to be maintained in working order

Typical Frequency

Dry and wet risers must be visually checked monthly where fitted, with these routine inspections continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings with riser systems, monthly checks are essential for maintaining firefighting capability. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring vertical firefighting systems remain operational.

Applicability

This task applies to educational establishments that have dry or wet riser systems installed, which is occasional as these systems are typically found in multi-storey buildings. It is a core statutory task where riser systems are present, essential for providing firefighting access to upper floors. The task applies to schools and colleges with riser systems in buildings over certain heights or with specific occupancy requirements.

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 riser system inspection. Staff should be familiar with riser locations and normal appearance.
- **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 monitoring

- **Cost implications**: Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional staff training
- **Resource requirements**: Access to riser inlets and valve locations
- **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 riser locations and normal appearance
- Confirm access to all riser inlets and valve boxes
- Check that inspection can be conducted safely in building areas
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- Riser location records and inspection checklist
- Logbook for recording inspection results
- Camera for documenting riser condition
- Pen for recording observations
- Basic tools for checking valve positions if needed

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

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

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Check inlet boxes for damage or tampering
2. Inspect valve positions and security
3. Verify riser pipes are intact and undamaged
4. Examine surrounding areas for obstructions
5. Check identification labels and signage
6. Ensure clear access to all components

Phase C: System Verification

1. Confirm valve positions are correct (normally open for wet risers)
2. Check for signs of leaks or water damage
3. Verify inlet connections are clean and accessible
4. Inspect for corrosion or mechanical damage
5. Check that access panels are secure

Phase D: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document condition of all risers and components
3. Photograph riser locations and any issues found
4. Note any obstructions removed or issues identified
5. Sign and date the log entry

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Inlet boxes must be intact and secure
- Valves must be in correct position and operable
- No visible damage or corrosion should be present
- 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 secure any damaged components and restrict access if necessary. Escalate issues to facilities management and arrange urgent repairs. Coordinate with fire service about affected areas.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Secure any access panels opened during inspection. Ensure riser areas remain clear and accessible.

Completion Checks

Verify that the log entry is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows riser 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**: 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**: Missing riser locations in remote areas, not checking valve positions, 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 building maintenance staff
- **Pro tips for educational settings**: Include riser checks in routine building maintenance patrols, use inspection as an opportunity to review firefighting access, and maintain clear records of normal conditions
- **Warning signs that indicate problems**: Damaged inlet boxes, incorrect valve positions, or signs of tampering

Quick Reference Checklist

- Previous inspection results reviewed
- Riser locations and access points identified
- Inlet boxes and valves inspected
- Pipework and connections checked
- 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 - Fire Hydrants 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.