



36. Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Means of Escape & Final Exit Doors Inspection

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes
Frequency:	Monthly
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 monthly inspections of escape routes and final exit doors ensure that these critical pathways remain clear and functional for safe evacuation. By maintaining unobstructed routes in busy educational settings, you protect the ability of pupils and staff to evacuate quickly during emergencies. Your systematic monitoring of these essential safety routes demonstrates your vital role in maintaining continuous evacuation capability.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly inspections confirm escape routes and final exit doors are unobstructed, open freely, and lead safely to assembly points. This routine check involves examining all escape routes for blockages, testing exit door operation, verifying signage visibility, and ensuring clear access to assembly areas. In education, corridors and exits are prone to being blocked by furniture, deliveries, or pupil activity, making regular checks essential. Ensuring clear escape paths is critical during term time when occupancy is high. The inspection includes checking all escape routes, documenting any obstructions, and ensuring immediate corrective actions. Evidence produced includes inspection log entries documenting all routes checked and findings, annotated photos showing escape routes and exit doors, and records of any obstructions removed or issues identified.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires means of escape to be maintained clear and unobstructed
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on means of escape maintenance
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on escape route inspection
- **Building Regulations 2010:** Require adequate means of escape
- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (for independent schools): Requires clear escape routes

Typical Frequency

Escape routes and final exit doors must be inspected monthly, with these routine checks continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings, monthly inspections are essential for maintaining clear evacuation routes. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring safe means of escape.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments, which is common as all buildings require clear escape routes. It is a core statutory task essential for maintaining safe evacuation capability. The task applies to all premises with escape routes and final exit doors.

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 escape route inspection. Staff should be familiar with building layout and escape procedures.
- **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 building.

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 all escape routes and exit doors
- **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 escape routes and building layout
- Confirm access to all escape routes and exit doors
- Check that inspection can be conducted safely in building areas
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- Building plans showing escape routes
- Inspection checklist and logbook
- Camera for documenting escape routes
- Measuring tools for checking clearances
- Pen for recording observations

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

1. Review building plans and escape route documentation
2. Gather inspection checklist and documentation forms
3. Prepare camera and measuring tools
4. Confirm access to all escape routes

Phase B: Escape Route Inspection

1. Check all escape routes for obstructions or blockages
2. Verify exit doors open freely in direction of escape
3. Examine door hardware and latching mechanisms
4. Check signage visibility and accuracy
5. Assess floor surfaces for trip hazards
6. Verify minimum widths are maintained

Phase C: Final Exit Inspection

1. Test final exit door operation and security
2. Check external areas lead safely to assembly points
3. Verify assembly point locations and accessibility
4. Examine external escape routes for obstructions
5. Check emergency lighting in escape routes

Phase D: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document condition of all escape routes and exit doors
3. Photograph routes showing any obstructions or issues
4. Note any immediate actions taken to clear obstructions
5. Sign and date the inspection log

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Escape routes must maintain minimum widths (typically 1200mm)
- Exit doors must open freely and lead to safe external areas
- No obstructions should impede evacuation
- Signage must be visible and accurate

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 found. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent corrective actions. Implement alternative evacuation procedures if routes are compromised.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Clear any obstructions found during inspection. Ensure escape routes remain clear after inspection.

Completion Checks

Verify that the inspection log is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows escape route 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:** Inspection log 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 concealed obstructions, not checking all escape routes, 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 escape route checks in routine building patrols, use inspection as an opportunity to review evacuation procedures, and maintain clear records of normal route conditions
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Blocked corridors, inoperable exit doors, or missing signage

Quick Reference Checklist

- Building plans and escape route documentation reviewed
- All escape routes identified and inspected
- Exit doors tested for free operation
- Obstructions identified and cleared
- Signage and emergency lighting verified
- Assembly points checked for accessibility
- 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 - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Fire Doors Integrity & Gaps Check
- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Disabled Refuge Functionality Test

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