



37. Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Escape Route Signage & Assembly Point Check

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 checks of escape route signage and assembly points ensure that clear guidance is available to direct safe evacuation during emergencies. By maintaining visible and accurate signage in dynamic educational environments, you help pupils and visitors navigate safely to designated assembly areas. Your systematic monitoring of these essential safety indicators demonstrates your vital role in effective emergency communication.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly checks confirm escape signage is visible and assembly points remain clearly identified and safe. This routine inspection involves examining all escape route signs for visibility and accuracy, verifying assembly point markers and safety, and checking for obstructions or damage. In schools, signage is often obscured by displays or wear, while assembly points may be affected by building works or playground use. These inspections ensure evacuation instructions remain clear to pupils and visitors. The inspection includes checking all signage locations, documenting any issues, and ensuring immediate corrective actions. Evidence produced includes annotated photos showing signage locations and conditions, inspection records documenting all checks performed and findings, and records of any repairs or improvements made.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires adequate escape signage and assembly arrangements
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on escape signage
- **British Standard BS 5499: Graphical symbols and signs - Safety signs:** Specifies requirements for fire safety signs
- **Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996:** Sets legal requirements for safety signs
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on emergency signage and assembly points

Typical Frequency

Escape route signage and assembly points must be checked monthly, with these routine inspections continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings, monthly checks are essential for maintaining clear evacuation guidance. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring effective emergency communication.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments, which is common as all buildings require escape signage and assembly points. It is a core statutory task essential for maintaining safe evacuation procedures. The task applies to all premises with escape routes and assembly 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 safety signage inspection. Staff should be familiar with building layout and assembly 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 sign replacement (£50-£200)
- **Resource requirements:** Access to all signage locations and assembly points
- **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 signage standards and building layout
- Confirm access to all signage locations and assembly points
- Check that inspection can be conducted safely in building areas
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- Building plans showing signage and assembly locations
- Inspection checklist and documentation forms
- Camera for documenting signage conditions
- Measuring tools for checking sign visibility
- Pen for recording observations

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

1. Review building plans and signage specifications
2. Gather inspection checklist and documentation forms
3. Prepare camera and measuring tools
4. Confirm access to all signage and assembly locations

Phase B: Signage Inspection

1. Check all escape route signs for visibility and legibility
2. Verify sign placement meets height and location requirements
3. Examine signs for damage, fading, or obstruction
4. Confirm directional arrows point to correct exits
5. Check emergency exit signs for illumination
6. Assess overall signage coverage throughout building

Phase C: Assembly Point Inspection

1. Verify assembly point locations and accessibility
2. Check assembly point markers and signage
3. Assess safety of assembly areas (traffic, weather protection)
4. Confirm clear access routes to assembly points
5. Check for any obstructions or hazards in assembly areas

Phase D: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document condition of all signage and assembly points
3. Photograph signage showing visibility and condition
4. Note any repairs or improvements needed
5. Sign and date the inspection record

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Signs must be visible from appropriate distances (typically 2-3 metres)
- Sign height must meet requirements (typically 2-2.5 metres)
- Assembly points must be safe and accessible
- No obstructions should impair signage visibility

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 signage. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent sign replacement or repair. Implement alternative evacuation guidance if signage is inadequate.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Clear any obstructions found during inspection. Ensure signage remains visible after inspection.

Completion Checks

Verify that the inspection record is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows signage 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:** Annotated photos and inspection record 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 obscured signs, not checking sign illumination, 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 signage checks in routine building patrols, use inspection as an opportunity to review evacuation procedures with staff, and maintain clear records of normal signage conditions
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Faded signs, obscured visibility, or inadequate assembly point access

Quick Reference Checklist

- Building plans and signage specifications reviewed
- All escape route signage inspected for visibility
- Sign placement and illumination verified
- Assembly point locations and safety checked
- Obstructions identified and cleared
- Photographic evidence collected
- Inspection results documented
- 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
- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Means of Escape & Final Exit Doors Inspection

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