



38. Fire - Emergency Lighting - Emergency Lighting Full Service & Duration Test

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Emergency Lighting
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Approved Contractor
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 commitment to maintaining fully operational emergency lighting ensures that safe evacuation routes remain illuminated during power failures. By ensuring these critical systems function correctly in schools and colleges used during evenings or winter months, you protect the ability of pupils and staff to evacuate safely in low-light conditions. Your expertise in overseeing these life-saving illumination systems demonstrates your essential role in comprehensive fire safety.

Task Summary

Statutory: Emergency lighting systems must undergo a full annual service and three-hour duration test by a competent contractor. This comprehensive maintenance involves testing all emergency lights, verifying battery performance, checking system operation, and ensuring compliance with standards. The service includes functional testing of all luminaires, battery capacity testing, inspection of wiring and controls, and verification of system reliability. In schools and FE colleges, this is vital during evening lettings, exams, or performances when buildings may be in low-light use. The inspection includes checking for damage, corrosion, and proper installation. Evidence produced includes the contractor's service certificate confirming compliance and functionality, detailed duration test results showing battery performance and system operation, and any recommendations for maintenance or

replacement.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires emergency lighting to be maintained in good working order
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on emergency lighting maintenance
- **British Standard BS 5266: Emergency lighting:** Specifies requirements for emergency lighting systems
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on emergency lighting maintenance
- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (for independent schools): Requires adequate emergency lighting

Typical Frequency

Emergency lighting systems must be serviced and tested annually, with this comprehensive maintenance typically scheduled during school holidays. In educational settings, annual servicing is essential for ensuring system reliability. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for maintaining emergency illumination systems.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments with emergency lighting systems, which is common in virtually all schools and colleges. It is a core statutory task essential for maintaining safe evacuation capability. The task applies to all premises with emergency lighting systems.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Approved Contractor
- **Contractor Requirements:** This task should be carried out by a competent emergency lighting maintenance company holding appropriate certifications. Contractors should be familiar with different lighting technologies and testing procedures. Typical cost range: £300-£800 depending on system size and complexity.
- **Permit to Work:** May require temporary system isolation and coordination with building users.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally contractor-delivered due to the specialist testing equipment and technical knowledge required.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during school holidays to allow for testing and any repairs
- **Cost implications:** Budget £300-£800 annually for professional servicing and testing
- **Resource requirements:** Allow access to all lighting units and control systems
- **Potential disruption:** May require temporary lighting interruption during testing
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Service findings should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure the contractor has expertise in emergency lighting systems
- Provide access to system documentation and control equipment
- Confirm testing can be conducted without endangering building occupants
- Arrange for safe testing conditions and area preparation

Tools & Materials

- System documentation and circuit diagrams
- Specialist testing equipment for battery and lamp performance
- Access keys and security codes for control panels
- Temporary lighting arrangements for testing periods
- Safety equipment for working with electrical systems

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Service Assessment

1. Review system documentation and previous service records
2. Identify all emergency lighting units and system components
3. Check system configuration and battery types
4. Prepare testing schedule and safety procedures

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Inspect all emergency luminaires for damage or obstruction
2. Check battery enclosures and indicator lights
3. Examine control panels and system status indicators

4. Verify signage and identification labels
5. Assess overall system condition and maintenance

Phase C: Functional Testing

1. Test automatic activation from mains failure simulation
2. Verify illumination levels meet requirements
3. Check battery performance and charging systems
4. Test manual override and test functions
5. Confirm system monitoring and fault indication

Phase D: Duration Testing

1. Conduct three-hour duration test on sample units
2. Monitor illumination levels throughout test period
3. Record battery performance and discharge characteristics
4. Verify system recovers to charging mode after test
5. Document test results and system performance

Phase E: Documentation and Certification

1. Prepare detailed test results and performance data
2. Issue service certificate confirming compliance
3. Document any units requiring replacement or repair
4. Recommend maintenance schedule and system upgrades

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Illumination must meet minimum requirements (typically 1 lux at floor level)
- Battery duration must sustain operation for 3 hours
- System must activate within 1 second of mains failure
- All units must function correctly during testing

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 faulty units and implement alternative lighting measures. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent repairs. Monitor affected areas closely until systems are restored.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Restore all systems to normal operation and remove any temporary lighting. Ensure control systems show correct status.

Completion Checks

Verify that the service certificate confirms system compliance. Confirm that duration test results document all performance measurements. Ensure recommendations are specific and prioritised.

Client Oversight Checklist (Before the Visit)

- Confirm contractor's expertise in emergency lighting systems
- Provide system documentation and location details
- Arrange access to all lighting units and controls
- Schedule during period when disruption is minimised

Client Oversight Checklist (During the Visit)

- Observe inspection of lighting units and batteries
- Ensure comprehensive functional and duration testing
- Verify that measurements are taken accurately
- Confirm detailed documentation of test results

Deliverables & Acceptance Criteria (After the Visit)

- Receive service certificate confirming system compliance
- Review detailed duration test results with performance measurements
- Ensure recommendations for maintenance are specific and prioritised
- Confirm that all documentation is complete and accurate

Defects & Follow-up

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Prioritise repairs to critical escape route lighting. Agree timescales for unit replacement. Schedule re-testing after major repairs.

Reinstatement & Sign-off

Confirm systems are operational and indicators show normal status. Complete final sign-off once all documentation is received.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** Contractor's service certificate and detailed duration test results must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Performance measurements and maintenance recommendations support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Not conducting full duration testing, missing concealed units, or failing to test all system functions
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain detailed system records, conduct pre-service visual checks, and coordinate with regular electrical maintenance
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Use servicing visits to review emergency lighting awareness, coordinate with evening events, and maintain clear records of system modifications
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Frequent battery failures, poor illumination levels, or system faults during testing

Quick Reference Checklist

- System documentation and previous records reviewed
- All emergency lighting units identified and inspected
- Functional testing of activation and illumination completed
- Three-hour duration test conducted on sample units
- Battery performance and charging verified
- Service certificate and test results received
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

This task is not normally grouped with other tasks.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Emergency Lighting - Emergency Lighting Monthly Flick Test

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