

Emergency lighting testing requirements under BS 5266

Automatic testing of emergency lighting is the best way to meet the Fire Safety Order obligations, and will reduce the burden of testing emergency lighting installations. ICEL, the emergency lighting arm of the Lighting Industry Federation (LIF), believes that Automatic Test Systems (ATS) are the best way of ensuring compliance with the required periodic testing and maintenance requirements.

Tuesday 26th October 2010, London – Because of low awareness and, to some extent, the complexity of the regulations, there is a risk that significant numbers of building owners, facilities managers and employers do not fully apply all of the emergency lighting periodic testing and maintenance requirements laid down in the BS 5266 Series of Codes of Practice, Guides and Standards. As a result, the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 may not always be met. For example, in a building emergency, such as a fire, if the emergency escape lighting system failed because of undetected faults, this could be a serious matter.

The Fire Safety Order places the responsibility for a premises' fire safety with the owner/occupiers of those premises and the person they have appointed as the 'Responsible Person' under the Order. The emergency lighting Code of Practice BS5266: Part 8 (EN50172), and Fire Safety legislation under Section 7 (testing, maintenance and record keeping), requires that 'Responsible Persons' must test their emergency lighting systems regularly and record the results. In large buildings, such manual testing can be a lengthy job that is difficult to achieve whilst keeping the building in a legal, fully working state. It can, therefore, be expensive, disruptive and sometimes difficult to be sure that it has been fully carried out.

Today, in still difficult economic circumstances, and where employees' time is under pressure as never before, there is a risk that manual checking of emergency lighting is incomplete.

Mf...

PRESS
RELEASE

...2

The result of that could be serious, both for individuals who have difficulty finding their way out of a burning building because of failed emergency lighting, and for those 'Responsible Persons' who have not carried out their duty of care - who could, therefore, find themselves being prosecuted.

Automatic testing for peace of mind

Such a scenario should never happen in a well-managed building, but one way of reducing the risk of such a problem occurring is to automatically test emergency lighting luminaires and related systems. There are two main types of ATS, the safety and basic performance criteria of which are given in BSEN 62034:

1. A self-test emergency luminaire that has built-in testing facilities to perform tests and indicate the results.
2. A test system that performs tests on one or more emergency luminaires connected to a remote panel, which provides the results.

Under 1), anyone near an emergency luminaire indicating a fault can report this to the 'Responsible Person'. However, it will still be necessary for the 'Responsible Person' to make the monthly visual check to monitor any fault indication and to ensure that emergency luminaires are un-obscured and able to carry out their intended function. When a fault is indicated, corrective action must be carried out within a reasonable time.

Under 2), the 'Responsible Person' can monitor test results status using the remote panel. If a fault is indicated, corrective action must be carried out within a reasonable time. The monthly walk-round check will still be needed to ensure that emergency luminaires are not obscured and can carry out their intended function.

Fire Safety Order guides available

A number of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order guides are available that will help building owners, managers and 'Responsible Persons' to perform their duties of care. These

Mf...

...3

cover the various types of premises, and are:

- Offices and shops
- Premises providing sleeping accommodation
- Residential care
- Small and medium places of assembly
- Large places of assembly
- Factories and warehouses
- Theatres and cinemas
- Educational premises
- Healthcare premises (responsibility of the Department of Health)
- Transport premises and facilities
- Open-air events.

The guides support the use of ATS as a way of complying with the regulations, which reduce the burden of regular manual testing and significantly increase confidence for owner/occupiers and their 'Responsible Persons' that their systems are compliant. ICEL recommends ATS for battery powered emergency lighting as the bench mark level for new and refurbished emergency lighting installations. The use of products without the automatic test feature means that building owners and employers must fully implement the required manual test procedures, which – as mentioned earlier – can involve considerable resource and perhaps be less comprehensive than automatic systems. More information can be obtained at www.icel.co.uk.

Note that Scotland and Northern Ireland have equivalent legislation and guides. The Scottish guides have been jointly produced by the Scottish Executive's Justice Department, HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland, the Scottish Building Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. Northern Ireland guides have yet to be announced, but are likely to follow the Scottish format.

ICEL and the LIF hold one-day Competent Engineer courses for suitably qualified engineers on how to respond to the latest fire safety legislation requirements. To enrol, please contact John Hugill on 07968 400 820 or email john@lif.co.uk.

ENDS - Word Count: 862

CAPTION:

Advanced Electronics' Lx control panels provide a flexible, cost effective solution to any emergency lighting testing and monitoring system.

Notes for editors**1) Effects of legislation**

The Fire Safety Order (FSO), which concerns non-domestic premises having employees (such as businesses), or guests (such as hotels) in England and Wales, has resulted in significant alterations to the ways in which all premises are assessed and made safe. The main effect has been a greater emphasis on fire prevention in such premises, which include the voluntary sector and self-employed people having premises separate from their homes.

An important change is that no longer is it the Fire Service's duty to make sure the workplace is safe. That duty lies with the 'responsible person', who is held accountable under the new legislation. This is a profound cultural change with major practical implications.

Although the Government has given responsible persons the authority to oversee their premises' fire safety, Fire Protection Officers (FPO) will audit Fire Risk Assessments and associated documentation relating to any premises. The responsible persons will then be informed of their compliance or otherwise. If there are concerns, FPOs can and do use their powers of enforcement.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG – www.communities.gov.uk) provides extra information, and has produced a series of guides to assist those preparing fire risk assessments.

2) BS5266 and Fire Safety Legislation

The emergency lighting code of practice BS5266: Part 10, and Fire Safety legislation under Section 7 (testing, maintenance and record keeping), requires that 'Responsible Persons' must test their emergency lighting systems regularly and record the results. This includes monthly and annual testing of every luminaire, with central battery system indicators being visually inspected daily. All self-contained emergency lighting must be functionally tested for 5 -10 minutes minimum every month, and tested for full rated duration of typically three hours at least every year.

Contact: Bernard Pratley

ICEL

Ground Floor, Westminster Tower,
3 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SL
Tel: 020 8677 0718
Email: info@icel.co.uk
Web: www.icel.co.uk

Contact: Bernard Pratley

Lighting Industry Federation (LIF)

Ground Floor, Westminster Tower,
3 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SL
Tel: 020 7793 3020
Email: info@lif.co.uk
Web: www.lif.co.uk

Contact: James Hunt

54 Applesham Avenue, Hove,
East Sussex BN 3 8JJ
Mobile: 0775 247 2812
Tel: +44 (0) 1273 725322
Email: james.a.hunt@talktalk.net