



EMERGENCY LIGHTING & EXIT SIGN TESTING



Emergency lighting provides two safeguards for a building in the event of power failure: First, safe and prompt access to emergency exits (egress), and second, to provide lighting of sufficient levels, and for a sufficiently long duration, to permit safe and orderly shutdown of processes that might become hazardous if simply abandoned.

Frequently, inspectors find that emergency lighting units have been installed and subsequently forgotten. Most emergency lighting units use batteries, which have a limited life span, and are subject to failure without warning. The “charging” light may be lit on the units, but this does not guarantee the lights will come on when the power fails.

The International Fire Code requires that emergency lighting units be able to provide illumination for 1-1/2 hours after power failure at a level sufficiently bright enough to allow persons to see their way to exits, or to safely shut down processes and machinery, etc.

Testing of required emergency lighting systems shall be conducted as follows:

1. Functional testing shall be conducted monthly with a minimum of 3 weeks and a maximum of 5 weeks between tests, for not less than 30 seconds.
 - This means that approximately **monthly, the “push-button” test should be conducted** by pressing the “test” button on the unit and **holding it for 30 seconds**. If the device does not light, the lamps are dim or it fails to light at full brilliance for 30 seconds, the unit should be serviced, repaired or replaced.
2. Functional testing shall be conducted annually for a minimum of 1-1/2 hours if the emergency lighting system is battery powered.
 - The annual test requires that the power actually be interrupted to the emergency lighting unit, by unplugging it, throwing a circuit breaker or other safe means, so no line power reaches it. If the unit does not provide light of normal brilliance for 1-1/2 hours it should be serviced, repaired or replaced.
3. Written records of visual inspections and tests shall be kept by the owner for inspection by the authority having jurisdiction.
 - A simple log should be maintained, containing the following information: description of the building’s emergency lighting equipment, by numbering system, or other system; test dates and times; the tester’s name; results of the test; and comments for referring failed tests to the appropriate persons for repair or replacement. A sample of such a form follows on the next page.

