



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, and must be tested to the following standards.

604.5.1 Activation test. An activation test of the emergency lighting equipment shall be completed monthly. The activation test shall ensure the emergency lighting activates automatically upon normal electrical disconnect and stays sufficiently illuminated for a minimum of 30 seconds.

604.5.1.1 Activation test record. Records shall be maintained on the premises for a minimum of three years and submitted to the fire code official upon request. The record shall include the location of the emergency lighting tested, whether the unit passed or failed, the date of the test, and the person completing the test.

604.5.2 Power test. For battery-powered emergency lighting, a power test of the emergency lighting equipment shall be completed annually. The power test shall operate the emergency lighting for a minimum of 90 minutes and shall remain sufficiently illuminated for the duration of the test.

604.5.2.1 Power test record. Records shall be maintained on the premises for a minimum of three years and submitted to the fire code official upon request. The record shall include the location of the emergency lighting tested, whether the unit passed or failed, the date of the test, and the person completing the test.



