



Your Specialists in Self Testing
Emergency Lighting P4.MD.35 Issue 2

P4 Explains Emergency Lighting Obligations



Emergency Lighting is of the utmost importance and a legal requirement in premises, excluding domestic premises, across the UK. In England and Wales the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, usually referred to as the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), brings significant fines for breaches of the order (with or without a fire) for which offenders are aggressively prosecuted. It is therefore vital that businesses, organisations and individuals are aware of the regulations and the obligations they impose.

Responsible Person

The responsibility for emergency lighting rests with a 'Responsible Person', who has control, or a degree of control, over premises and fire-safety systems within premises. In English law a 'person' can be either an individual or an entity such as a limited company.

Therefore the 'Responsible Person' could be the building owner, landlord, facilities manager, estates manager, building occupier or designated person. They may all individually or collectively be responsible for the safety of everyone who might be on the premises at any time.

The 'Responsible Person' (or 'Responsible Persons') must ensure everyone on the premises, or nearby, can escape safely if there is a fire or failure of the mains power supply, and must provide appropriate assistance to those who may need extra help or have a disability.



Suitability and Compliance

Documentation must be available to enable the 'Responsible Person' to demonstrate the suitability and compliance of their system and procedures to inspecting authorities, who have the responsibility to enforce the Regulatory Reform Order. Inspecting authorities may investigate on a random basis, as a result of information, or if there has been a fire or false alarm.

There is an emphasis on 'consultation', covered in Clause 4.1 of BS5266 Part 1: 2016 code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises. This stipulates that it is important, if possible, to consult with all relevant persons, so that the 'Responsible Person' can consider all of the hazards and people at risk, together with the capabilities of maintenance and operating staff to enable the design and installation to match the emergency lighting to the application needs.

To demonstrate compliance, regular risk assessments are required against which current legislation acts retrospectively. Therefore, premises engineered to previous versions of the standards need to be assessed to consider if they need to be upgraded. The 'Responsible Person'/Risk Assessor might require guidance to assist them to decide if an upgrade to the latest standard is needed, and also to identify the degree of the urgency.



Risk Assessment

Employers and persons who have control of premises are required by legislation to carry out an assessment of the fire risks to occupants of premises and other people in the vicinity of the premises to ensure that they are protected from fire and its effects. The regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that the risk assessment, which is referred to as the "Fire Risk Assessment" is suitable and sufficient.

The installed emergency lighting should be evaluated as part of the assessment of the means of escape within the "Fire Risk Assessment". Persons carrying out this "Fire Risk Assessment" should be competent, having appropriate experience and/or qualification. The "Fire Risk Assessment" should be regularly reviewed (typically every 12 months) against the latest issue of BS5266 Part 1 to consider whether emergency lighting installations are adequate.

