LIGHTING SERVICES, INC.
Celebrating 79 Years of Service

Top 10 Things to Know About Emergency Lighting

1) Sometimes called "egress lighting," emergency lighting must be arranged to provide illumination automatically in the event of any interruption of normal lighting.

2) Emergency lighting is required in all commercial, industrial, educational, religious, institutional, public housing, medical and many other facilities whether for-profit or non-profit. *Refer to NFPA 101 2006, UL 924 and local municipal building codes for specific requirements of your occupancy.*

3) Emergency lighting is designed to illuminate and identify hallways, stairwells, and exits to facilitate safe and orderly evacuation from a structure.

4) "Standby lighting," lighting that is meant to supply illumination in the event of a power failure when you wish to continue normal activities within your facility for an extended period of time (usually longer than 90 minutes), is NOT emergency lighting.

5) There are numerous regulatory codes that govern emergency lighting requirements including: NFPA 101, NFPA 70, OSHA Code of Federal Regulation, National Electrical Code, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), International Fire Code, and International Building Code.

6) Code requirements call for monthly 30-second tests to be sure that the battery keeps the lamps lit brightly to ensure safe egress in the event of a power outage or other emergency. By just pushing the test button for a few seconds you are not testing the strength of the battery back-up power. The longer you hold the test button the better. Not only do you get a better idea of the condition of the battery, when you release the test button, the charger will come on and rejuvenate the battery. This process greatly increases battery life.

7) Code requirements call for an annual 90-minute full-load-test to insure all of your emergency lighting systems will operate for a full 1.5 hours (in most states) in the event of an extended emergency. The process can be time consuming. However, if the emergency lighting is on a circuit breaker you can turn off the appropriate breakers and simulate a 90 minute power failure without going around to each individual unit.

8) Emergency lighting can be provided within overhead lighting fixtures (such as fluorescent power packs or fluorescent emergency packs), individual wall-mounted units (as part of an exit sign, or separate "two-headed" units), or as part of a central emergency lighting system (32v DC system, inverter, or generator).

9) The different types of emergency lighting require different steps by which to follow to complete the testing properly. Inverters or DC systems can be tricky. Most DC systems have remote relays and a true test cannot be completed unless the charger is turned off. AC inverters have special lighting loads. When testing an inverter one must be careful not to disrupt the occupants of the building or computer equipment.

10) Regardless of the type of emergency lighting your facility has, it must be inspected regularly and documentation must be kept to meet code requirements and insure you are prepared for a life-safety emergency. Today the degree of potential liability, should fire code requirements not be met, can be potentially disastrous.

If you are unsure what your facility needs to be code compliant, or your systems need repair, please don't hesitate to give us a call at 1-800-225-0263 or send us an email to sales@lightingservicesinc.net

Sources: NFPA 101, NFPA 70, OSHA Code of Federal Regulation, National Electrical Code, International Fire Code, International Building Code.