

Emergency lighting & exit sign inspection

OPERATIONS CHEAT-SHEET / Walk-through checks, test intervals + printable records

START WITH THE ADOPTED CODE

This field aid is a practical checklist, not the NFPA 101 standard or a design approval. Requirements depend on the adopted edition, occupancy chapter, equipment listing, approved test method, and direction of the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

01 Project & inspection details

FACILITY / PROJECT

JURISDICTION / AHJ

OCCUPANCY / ADOPTED EDITION

INSPECTION DATE / INSPECTOR

02 Walk-through checklist

Mark each item; record deficiencies, repairs or follow-up in the notes column.

OK	INSPECTION POINT	ACTION / NOTES
☐	Confirm the designated egress routes and required equipment for the occupancy and adopted code.	
☐	Check emergency luminaires and exit signs for damage, missing units, secure mounting, obstruction, and visibility.	
☐	Check exit-sign legend, directional indication, contrast, and viewing distance along the approach and route.	
☐	Where required, check floor-proximity signs and egress-path markings against the adopted location rules.	
☐	Check status indicators and test controls; document any failed battery, lamp, charger, or diagnostic indicator.	
☐	For photoluminescent signs, verify the listed charging-light conditions and required face illumination.	
☐	During a functional test, verify emergency operation and record defects, repairs, and responsible personnel.	

TESTING REMINDER

Conventional method: at least **30 seconds monthly**, generally 3 to 5 weeks between tests. Battery-powered systems also receive an annual **90-minute** test where that method applies. Approved interval extensions and self-testing or computer-based methods have separate conditions; verify the allowed method for the equipment and adopted edition.

Key values & test records

REFERENCE SHEET / Quick cross-checks + a maintenance log to keep on file

Confirm applicability against the adopted edition, occupancy chapter, equipment instructions, and approved design. These reference values do not replace a project-specific review.

03

Emergency egress illumination

MEASURE	REFERENCE VALUE	WHEN / WHERE
Transfer to another energy source	No more than 10 seconds	Where illumination depends on changing energy sources; an allowance, not a target delay. Sec. 7.9.1.3.
Initial illumination	Average at least 1.0 fc (10.8 lux); no point below 0.1 fc (1.1 lux)	Along the egress path at floor level. Sec. 7.9.2.1 and edition-specific subsections.
At the end of 90 minutes	Average at least 0.6 fc (6.5 lux); no point below 0.06 fc (0.65 lux)	Along the egress path at floor level. Sec. 7.9.2.1 and edition-specific subsections.
Maximum-to-minimum ratio	Not more than 40:1	Emergency illumination along the path of egress. Sec. 7.9.2.1.3 in later editions.

Testing method

Conventional method: monthly 30-second functional test, generally 3 to 5 weeks between tests. Sec. 7.9.3.

Edition differences

The 2012 edition groups illumination values in Sec. 7.9.2.1 and offers three testing methods. The 2018 and later editions offer a fourth method tied to generator and transfer-equipment testing under Sec. 7.9.2.4.

Exit-sign visual inspections

The 2012 and 2018 editions separately specify a visual inspection of exit-sign illumination at intervals no longer than 30 days, or specified monitoring. That separate sentence is absent from 2021 and 2024 published text and the 2027 Second Draft.

Local approval & records

Monthly interval extensions and self-testing or computer-based methods have separate conditions. Follow the adopted edition and equipment instructions, obtain approval where required, and retain written inspection and test records.

PRINTABLE LOG / Use one row per unit and test; print additional copies as needed

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