



## TESTING METHODS

Most emergency lights and exit signs have a small “push to test” button somewhere on the casing. You can **push and hold this button for 30 seconds to test the bulbs and battery**. The lights and signs should come on and remain at the same brightness level for the full 30 seconds. If the lights dim right away, or some of the bulbs do not work, contact your electrician for repairs.

For a large number of devices, or for the 90-minute test that is required each year, there is a second option for testing. Locate the circuit breaker or fuse that supplies power to the emergency lights and exit signs. (You may need to contact an electrician if circuit breakers are not properly labeled.) The circuit breaker should be turned off and the lights observed to determine if they work for the 90-minute (annual) or 30-second (monthly) testing period.

**Note:** Computers or similar devices may be powered by the same circuit.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is emergency lighting?**

Emergency lighting equipment is designed to provide illumination when normal power is lost. Emergency lights are typically powered by batteries but may also be powered by an auxiliary power system. The system must provide the proper amount of illumination for 90 minutes (California Fire Code 604.6.2).



### **What is the difference between emergency lighting and exit signs?**

Exit signs indicate the closest safe exit in an emergency, while emergency lights help individuals find a safe route to evacuate the building. Although these are often separate devices, with the continuous advances in technology they are often paired together.

### **What regulations require testing?**

California Fire Code Section 604 requires a **monthly** 30-second test and a 90-minute **annual** test. In addition, the California Electrical Code Section 701 requires periodic testing of emergency lights in a manner acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. Both codes require written records to be kept on-site for inspection.

### **Why do I need to test the lights for 30 seconds?**

Many defective batteries maintain just enough charge to fully light up the bulbs for a few seconds, but then quickly lose power. If you do not test for 30 seconds, you may find that the lights and signs go out in just a few seconds when you really need them.



### **Why is keeping a log important?**

Written records of inspections/tests should be kept on-site for review by the authority having jurisdiction. It is important to keep an accurate log as Fire Inspectors, Building Inspectors, and OSHA Inspectors may inspect emergency lighting and issue violations and fines if the units prove to be inoperable.