8 tips for smooth evacuation

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Ensuring a smooth evacuation

Eaton's 8 top tips

Making sure your business meets emergency lighting regulations is essential. Discover top tips from our seasoned compliance experts.

8 expert tips to ensure emergency lighting compliance

Emergency lighting acts like a lifeline during emergency situations. Businesses are advised to use emergency lighting that is covered by a national accreditation scheme in their respective country. In the UK, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 recommends businesses use emergency lighting that's covered by the BSI Kite Mark Scheme. As for our top tips? Here they are:

1. Carry out a risk assessment and keep insurance policies valid

In many countries legislation requires the business to carry out a risk assessment and keep a written record of this assessment. It is good practice to ensure that the level of illumination is correct in terms of brightness and duration – and any other points particular to the business premises. Failure to comply could invalidate insurance policies, so it is important to ensure the business is up to date.
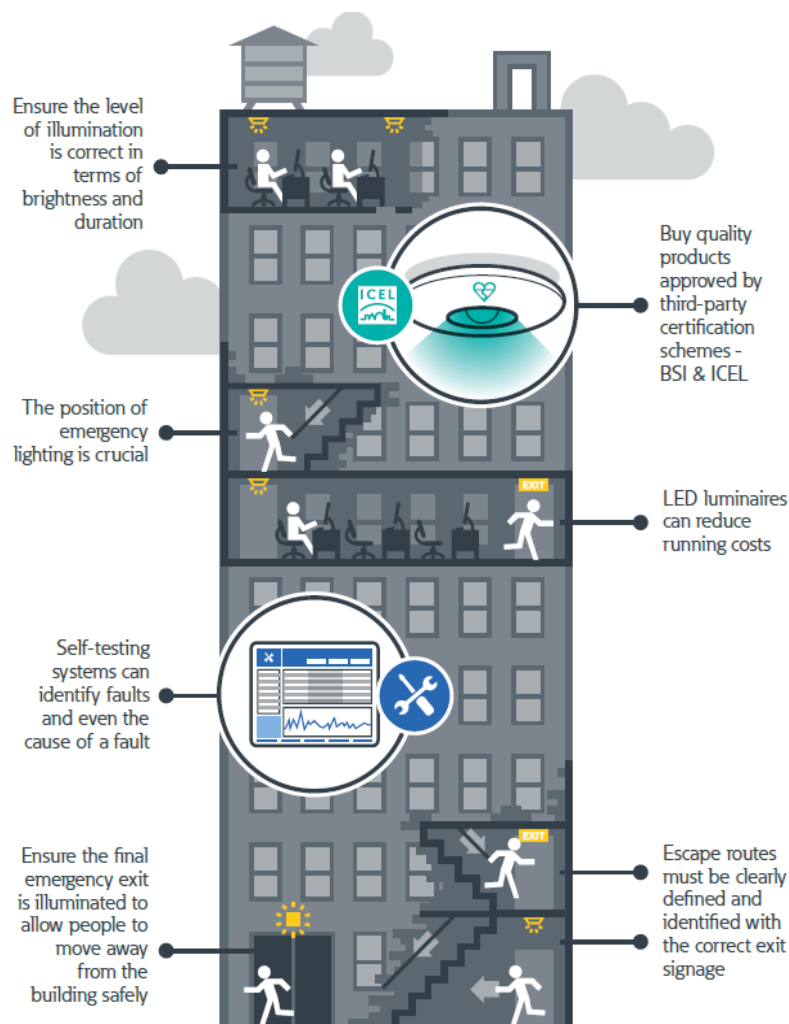
If you have five or more employees, the Regulatory Reform Order requires you to carry out a risk assessment and keep a written record of this assessment. You'll need to make sure the level of illumination is correct in terms of brightness and duration – and any other points particular to your premises. Failure to comply with these points could invalidate insurance policies, so make sure you're up to date.

2. Buy quality products

Given that emergency lighting isn't used every day, many people install cheap solutions. This could turn out to be a false economy, since the lifespan of associated batteries and lamps could be shorter, and the lights themselves could have inferior optics. Cheaper options might be more vulnerable to failure, so choose wisely.

3. Save time with third-party certified products

Buying products approved by third-party certification schemes such as BSI Kitemarking and the Industry Committee for Emergency Lighting (ICEL) is one of the most reliable ways to ensure your emergency lighting is fit for purpose. It'll also save time in the procurement process.

Ensure the level of illumination is correct in terms of brightness and duration

Buy quality products approved by third-party certification schemes - BSI & ICEL

The position of emergency lighting is crucial

LED luminaires can reduce running costs

Self-testing systems can identify faults and even the cause of a fault

Ensure the final emergency exit is illuminated to allow people to move away from the building safely

Escape routes must be clearly defined and identified with the correct exit signage

4. Consider long-term costs

Purchasing high quality and industry approved emergency lighting may spread more light across wider distances, so fewer units will be needed to provide the required level of illumination. Fewer units means installation costs will also be cheaper. LED-based lights should also be considered. They use less power and require less maintenance – thereby reducing overall running costs.

5. Location, location, location

Where you position your emergency lighting is crucial. Key locations to consider are: along escape routes, at every change of direction, adjacent to any step or trip hazard, throughout every flight of stairs, close to fire-fighting equipment, call points, first aid points, outside every final exit point and any other location identified by your risk assessment.

6. Pay attention to the exit

Regulations require external lighting to ensure evacuees can exit a building safely. This means applications will need a weatherproof luminaire operating in maintained or switched maintained mode, controlled by daylight sensors. LED luminaires can be used for this purpose to reduce running costs.

7. Consider testing, maintenance and servicing

Aside from purchasing quality emergency luminaires, another tip to reduce ongoing costs is to consider self-testing systems. Thanks to these clever systems, results from an entire network are collected and fed back to a central point where the exact location of a fault can be pinpointed in real time. The system can even identify the cause of the fault, so the repair process can take place quickly and the fault can possibly be prevented in future.

8. Clearly mark exit routes

It's important to consider signage at the earliest stage. Escape routes must be clearly defined and identified with the correct exit signage. When selecting a product, it's important to know that the viewing distance for an internally-illuminated exit sign is calculated by multiplying the height of the illuminated element by a factor of 200. Reputable manufactures know this fact, so you can use it to judge who you would like to partner with going forward.

If you would like to find out more, please contact us at

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