



EMERGENCY LIGHTING AND EXIT SIGNS

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In the event of an emergency and if a major power failure has occurred, most occupants within a building do not realise that even during the day, a building can be extremely dark making the exits difficult to locate. To ensure that this problem is mitigated in the event of an emergency, exit signs and emergency lighting are installed throughout a building. This means that the occupants of the building can find the quickest way to evacuate the building in the case of an emergency. Exit signs and emergency lighting are installed and connected to the mains power of the building. To ensure that the emergency lighting and exit signage will operate in an emergency, the emergency lighting and exit signs will have an internal battery allowing illumination even when mains power is out.

Australian Standards AS 2293.1-2005, "Emergency escape lighting and exit signs for buildings", states that exit signage and emergency lighting must stay illuminated for a minimum of 90 minutes. The Australian Standards and local council requirements also state that exit signage and emergency lighting must be tested and discharged at the following intervals:

- 6 Monthly: Technician must conduct a 90 minute power drop test
- Annual: Technician must conduct a 90 minute power drop test

By conducting the required testing not only do you meet your duty of care, but also by discharging the batteries every six months you will prolong the life of the exit sign or emergency light.

There are three types of emergency lighting:

1. Sustained – A sustained emergency light has two lamps within the light fitting and only one lamp works at either time.
2. Non-maintained – These emergency lights are normally non-illuminated, are consistently on charge and only illuminate when the main power has failed.
3. Maintained – A maintained emergency light has only one lamp which is illuminated both on mains power and when mains power fails.

Section 2.7 of [AS/NZS 3012:2010 Electrical installation – Construction and demolition sites](#), requires sufficient battery-powered lighting to be installed in stairways, passageways and next to switchboards. This allows for safe access and exit from the area if there is a loss of power and there is not enough natural lighting.

Internally illuminated emergency evacuation signage may be used as part of an existing emergency lighting system. The system of lighting must have battery backup light fittings capable of illuminating the exit signage and provide clear directions for safe exit from the workplace in the event of power failure.

For more information refer to: [AS 2293.1-2005 Emergency escape lighting and exit signs for buildings – System design, installation and operation](#).

AS 2293.1 allows for an internally illuminated exit sign to perform roles of illuminated emergency exit signage and emergency escape luminaire provided that it meets the requirements of both purposes as set out in the standard.

Emergency escape luminaires should be located within 2 metres of the approach side of each doorway requiring an exit sign and located to emphasis potential hazards to people exiting the workplace.

For further guidance on emergency lighting and exit signage, refer to:

- [AS 2293.1-2005 Emergency escape lighting and exit signs for buildings – System design, installation and operation](#)
- [AS 2293.3-2005 Emergency escape lighting and exit signs for buildings – Emergency escape luminaires and exit signs](#)

Lifts: Section 2.8.3 of [AS/NZS 3012:2010 Electrical installations – Construction and demolition sites](#) also requires minimum emergency lighting levels of 20 lux to allow for safe egress from the lift shaft.

For further reading and information visit:

<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/construction/workplace-hazards/lighting2>

<http://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/emergency-lighting>

<https://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/electrical-mechanics-inspect-test-emergency-lighting-systems>