

DRY RISER SERVICING

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE SERVICING, MAINTAINING AND TESTING OF DRY RISERS IN THE UK

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended as a guide for the servicing testing and maintenance of dry risers. A fact sheet for any building manager so they can be confident that they have fulfilled their legal duty to maintain the dry riser in their property.



A dry riser is a system of pipe work and valves that runs up through a building. The system allows fire fighters to easily access water at a high pressure from each individual floor of the building. In normal circumstances these systems sit unused and can become damaged, neglected or even vandalised.

If there is ever a fire it is vital that the dry riser is in perfect working condition and easily accessible. People's lives may depend on it. For this reason, testing and maintenance of dry risers is required by law. The person responsible for the building i.e. the property owner, landlord or facilities manager, is responsible for maintaining the dry riser. In the event of a fire that person will need to show that the system has been properly tested and that there is a valid certificate of compliance in place.

THE STANDARDS THAT GOVERN DRY RISERS AND THEIR MAINTENANCE

To ensure its effectiveness and legal compliance, a dry riser need to be designed, installed and regularly tested to meet the following British Standards and Building Regulations:

- **[BS 9990:2015 Non automatic fire-fighting systems in buildings. Code of practice](#)**
BS 9990:2015 gives recommendations for non-automatic fire-fighting systems in buildings. It covers good practice in matters affecting the design, installation, testing and maintenance of such systems including wet and dry fire-fighting mains.
- **[BS 9991:2015 Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings. Code of practice](#)**
BS 9991 exists to help people put adequate fire safety measures in place in residential buildings. This includes fire detection and alarm systems and fixed fire-fighting systems. The 2015 revision provides a full technical update, to take into account new and revised standards published since its last publication, in 2011.
- **[BS 9999:2017 Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings](#)**
BS 9999 gives recommendations and guidance on the design, management and use of buildings to achieve reasonable standards of fire safety for all people in and around them. It also provides guidance on the on-going management of fire safety within a building throughout its entire life cycle, including guidance for designers to ensure that the overall design of a building assists and enhances the management of fire safety.
- **[Fire safety: Approved Document B](#)**
Building regulation in England for fire safety in residential homes, including new and existing dwellings, flats, residential accommodation, schools, colleges and offices.

Whilst it is important to be aware of these regulations this is a daunting reading list, so what follows is a summary of the relevant requirements.

THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TESTING ON A DRY RISER

Every 6 months a visual inspection is required. This involves checking of each component to ensure there has been no vandalism or theft.

Every 12 months a wet pressure test is required to ensure the integrity of the pipework and valves.

The standards also state that dry riser maintenance and repairs should be carried out by a competent person.

WHAT THE SERVICING AND TESTING INVOLVES

The 6 monthly visual test, as you would imagine, is fairly straight forward for an experienced engineer. The inspection includes inlets, landing valves, drain valves and landing valve boxes. This usually takes about 30 minutes.

The Annual pressure test involves charging the system with pressurized water to 12 Bar (175psi) for 15 minutes. This is to ensure that there are no leaks under typical working pressure. With a well-equipped, experience team the test is not messy or disruptive however you should be aware there is some noise from the test equipment pump. It will take somewhere in the order of an hour to complete the full annual dry riser testing. The test equipment is mounted in a van which needs to be able to park in close proximity (typically 20 meters, but may vary) of the dry riser inlet (usually located outside). There is no need to accompany the engineers but they do need access information and they do need to enter the property.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DRY RISER FAILS OR IS OUT OF SERVICE?

If the dry riser fails its test, it should immediately be reported to the property owner and dependent on the severity of the failure, the local fire brigade. Priority must be given to repair the faulty system. A remedial quotation should be requested immediately to bring the dry riser up to standard. This should usually be issued within 24hrs. Arrangements should be made to get the work completed and system repaired promptly by a competent person.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SELECTING A CONTRACTOR

There are three main things to look for when selecting a contractor to work on your dry risers: qualifications, accreditations and experience. One simple way to achieve this is to select a contractor with CHAS H&S accreditation. [CHAS](#) (The Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme) are an authority on health and safety standards. They are the largest and most widely recognised body that offers suitable third part accreditation to suppliers who demonstrate the appropriate H&S qualifications and experience to carry out dry riser servicing.

In addition, the **Risk Assessment** and **Method Statement** of the contractor should be inspected to ensure safe working practices are adopted (due to the pressures being used and the potential proximity to the general public).

DRY RISER CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Finally, at the end of the testing ensure that the appropriate test certificate is provided. Building Control or the Fire Service could at any time ask for the Dry Riser Certificate of Compliance, so the Property Manager should ensure they have a current one to hand if requested.