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Maintenance of Lightning Protection Systems



The frequency of test and inspection for lightning protection systems depends on the particular system you have installed. The previous British Standard BS 6651 recommended test and inspection at fixed intervals not exceeding 12 months. The interval under the new standard (BS 62305) is less prescriptive and takes into account the complexity of the system installed.

You should be guided by your lightning protection engineer who will advise a maintenance regime appropriate to the system installed on your building and the particular risks associated with your building in respect of lightning strike. A simple system may only require

combined test and inspection every 3-5 years.

When engaging a contractor to maintain your lightning protection system you should ensure they have full scope registration or membership to work on commercial installations with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC), The Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) or The National Association of Professional Inspectors and that they are familiar with the current standard for lightning protection systems.

Lightning protection systems are usually mechanically robust and require little maintenance, but there may be times when the components are damaged e.g. vandalism or other building/ maintenance work which displaces the connecting tapes etc. You should visually check your lightning protection system every 12 months. This need not be carried out by an engineer provided the person carrying out the check is sufficiently familiar with the layout of the system to know where the tape/ rod runs are and can access the earth pit. When opening the earth pit DO NOT disconnect anything, simply see that the connection is firm and has not loosened up. If it has, then contact your lightning protection engineer. It is usually best to have a professional look at that situation to ensure that the connections are not stressed. NB: An in house visual inspection DOES NOT involve ladders or other work at height equipment.

If you suspect there has been a lightning strike you should have the system checked regardless of when the last scheduled test and inspection took place.