ROUTINE CHECKS AND SAMPLING ON A PERIODIC

MUST YOU TEST EVERY POINT?

ROUTINE CHECKS — AND WHO DOES THEM

Guidance Note 3 · Section 3 . Separate from the periodic itself, and the two get confused.

LOOKING FOR
Breakages, wear, deterioration
Signs of overheating — discolouration, smell
Missing parts — covers, screws, **blanks**
Loose fixings
Switchgear accessible and not obstructed
Labelling present and legible
Operation of switchgear, and of test buttons

> `Routine checks do not have to be carried out by an electrically skilled person`

The occupier or duty holder can do them, once they know what to look for. They are looking, not dismantling — which is the whole point of a routine check.

> ✋ **The frequency is set by the duty holder, not by you.** You can recommend — six-monthly on something being relied on for protection, say — but the interval is theirs to set. This catches people out.

SAMPLING — WHEN, AND HOW MUCH

Sampling means inspecting and testing a proportion of the installation rather than all of it, and drawing a conclusion from it. It is allowed, but it is conditional.

> `No previous test results means no sampling. You test the whole installation`

SITUATION	WHAT YOU DO
Previous records available and credible	Sample a proportion of it
No previous records	**Full inspection and test.** Nothing to sample against
Sample results differ from what the records say	**100% of the installation is then tested**
Records turn out to be wrong — wrong cable type, wrong method	Treat the rest with real caution; the records are no longer evidence

Guidance Note 3 · Section 3 gives sample sizes and a flowchart for adjusting them.

Documentation missing when you arrive?

Do the full inspection, tell the client why, and renegotiate the extent and limitations — because what you agreed was based on documentation that has not appeared. Which is the argument for getting all of it **before** agreeing anything.

WHAT THE SAMPLE IS CHOSEN ON

Not at random. **Guidance Note 3** · Section 3 sets out what to weigh.

FACTOR	WHY IT MATTERS
Age and condition	Older and harder-used parts are more likely to show something
Type and use of the installation	A production area is nothing like the offices on the same site, even on the same supply
Environment and temperature	Hot, wet, dusty or corrosive areas first
Work carried out since the last inspection	New work is where the new faults are
Time since the previous inspection	A lapsed interval raises the sample
Quality of the records	Poor records mean less can be assumed

✋ **100% is not always realistic** — a school, a factory, a large site with buried cabling. That is exactly the case sampling exists for, and exactly the case where the records have to be good enough to support it.

Time does not equal condition.

An installation inspected a year ago can be in a worse state than one inspected five years ago, because someone changed a plastic accessory for a metal one and left an unsleeved conductor behind it. Age raises the odds; it does not decide the answer.

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