

# Why Emergency Lighting is Critical

When the power goes out, Fulham knows reliable and efficient emergency lighting is essential to saving lives.

By Rachel Coon

## The concept of emergency lighting is simple:

When the power goes out, backup is essential to light the exit. For some reason, though, it's often one of the last things building designers incorporate, despite the fact that emergency lighting is a safety code requirement for most structures. It's one of the greatest challenges Fulham faces as a global leader in emergency lighting solutions—raising awareness about its necessity and encouraging designers to work solutions into the initial building plan.

## New and Improved

The world of emergency lighting has evolved well beyond the traditional “bug-eye” installations jutting from walls near doorways, though. While those luminaires are effective, they are less than aesthetically appealing and are often not ADA compliant. Plus, as the market has moved toward greener goals, long-lasting, low-energy LED lighting has become the standard.

“We came into the LED market really early on and were one of the first to develop these emergency lighting systems,” says **Andy Firchau**, Fulham's marketing manager. Today, Fulham's **HotSpot1** LED emergency lighting system is one of the company's most popular products with kits that include an emergency LED driver, module, and battery pack. These self-contained compact systems allow inconspicuous emergency lighting to be added to almost any existing fixture and offer a variety of output levels, run times, and plug-and-play wiring for maximum flexibility and easy installation, whether initial construction or retrofitting.

“Ideally we want our clients to think about emergency lighting from the beginning, when they're first designing the building and setting up a lighting scheme,” Firchau says. That along with helping clients understand building codes and safety regulations—particularly, how much and for how long illumination is required in an emergency situation—is a big part of Fulham's goal. “Understanding what is required can be challenging because it's not always straightforward. You have to be aware of local requirements and how that applies to your building. So we work with clients to find the best emergency kits for their building or their particular light fixtures,” Firchau says.

## A Bright Future

Fulham is ahead of the curve as far as its breadth of products, raising the bar for innovative, energy-efficient emergency lighting solutions. Based in California, Fulham's HotSpot1 systems—and many of the company's emergency products—comply with California Energy Commission (CEC) Title 20, which sets national trends for regulating the power a system can use in standby mode. CEC Title 20 requires energy standby on most emergency products to be less than 0.9W, while the industry average is approximately 3W on standby. “A typical office building can have thousands of emergency backup products on standby, but by being CEC Title 20 compliant, our emergency backup products conserve a significant amount of energy as they are on standby for most of their service life,” explains **Alvaro Garcia**, product director at Fulham.

Fulham's products have also gotten cleaner, in part due to the use of LiFePO4 non-toxic batteries in place of nickel-cadmium batteries with known carcinogens. LiFePO4 batteries—one of the most environmentally friendly battery chemistries available today—are more energy-efficient with less self-discharge, meaning less energy is needed to charge and maintain the charge. LiFePO4 batteries also have a longer service life expectancy, requiring less replacements and less waste as a result.

Replaceable batteries are fairly unique to the industry—many of Fulham's competitors fully enclose the battery in the same housing with the emergency driver and battery charger, requiring a system replacement. Fulham was one of the first lighting manufacturers to offer replaceable batteries instead. “LED lighting will outlast us all,” Garcia says. “There's no sense in replacing perfectly functional LED components when all you need is a new battery.”

When it comes to emergency events—a fire in a school, a power outage at a high-rise—stress levels are already running high; you don't want to be left in the dark. Fulham's emergency lighting systems are designed to consume the least amount of power necessary to sustain emergency readiness while delivering the maximum lighting output in an emergency situation for the minimum illumination time required for safe exit—typically, 90 minutes on battery power. To top it all off, you probably won't even know the emergency is lighting is there until you need it. Fulham's HotSpot1 is hidden within traditional luminaires, essentially invisible to passersby until the lights go into emergency mode. **gb&d**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FULHAM



## THERE'S MORE: EZ EXIT A NEW EMERGENCY LIGHTING SOLUTION

Many offices, schools, and commercial buildings use a T-grid ceiling system consisting of panels, air vents, and lighting fixtures. Fulham's latest product—the HotSpot EZ Exit Emergency Lighting System—augments conventional exit signs, lighting a path to safety using linear LED strips integrated into existing T-grid ceilings.

EZ Exit is an inconspicuous option for adding emergency lighting. “We have heard from designers and builders working on new structures that they plan to incorporate our EZ Exit lighting,” says Andy Firchau, Fulham's marketing manager. “It's so easy to install and very aesthetically appealing—it's designed so you don't even know it's there until the power's out.”