

A day in the life of a Tunstall Apprentice Engineer

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Our day starts like most people's; get up, get ready and leave for work. Being out in the field means we have no fixed place of work and are constantly working in different locations. Today we're in Nottingham.

After arriving at the site and meeting with the Senior Engineer, I find out about our first job of the day, emergency light testing. Firstly, we checked exactly how many emergency lights there were to ensure they all get checked. After flicking the emergency light switch, we make our way around the site, checking that all the emergency lights have turned on, are bright and that they have a green light showing.

These checks are important to ensure the lights are in full working order and will light the path and stairways in the event of a power cut. The green light shows that the lights are charging. Any lights that do not turn on or have no green light will need to be replaced or have the batteries changed. This type of job doesn't involve too much brainpower and depending on the size of the building can be a lengthy process, but a great way to tick off my exercise for the day with all the running up and down the stairs! A couple more emergency light tests at other sites and it was mid-afternoon.

Next, we head to the second job of the day, where a smoke alarm was missing and a pull cord not working, which you'd think, would be a relatively simple fix... not today! After assessing the situation, we found five more pullcords connected to a different intercom, all of which were not working. The fun begins. We began taking them down and finding that they had been disconnected, but it still wasn't clear why. We head up into the loft to find chewed cables... Great, mice or rats!? We make our way through the lofts, identifying the chewed cables from those still intact only to find a stash of nuts. The suspect had changed. Squirrels.

After more steps gained going up and down the loft, half a dozen new cables and a few choice words later, all the pullcords were now reconnected and we carried out our final tests. We finish up and come down from the loft, to the noise of footsteps and scratching, they'd only been sat up there watching us fix the damage they had caused!

Fortunately, although the job is varied, pest control is not our bag. After notifying the site manager, we left happy knowing we'd done all we could and more, by identifying the problem so it didn't happen again. Back in the van, we look over to the roof only to see those pesky squirrels scurrying around, laughing at us no doubt. Little did they know, pest control was on the way!

Home time. And that's my day. Emergency light testing and playing detective with a bunch of squirrels.