



Lifts and Hoists

Lifts and hoists are used for transporting people and goods vertically between floors. If properly designed and maintained there is relatively little risk to the user. There can however, be a much greater risk to the person who services and repairs the lifts.

Most lifts are required by law to be thoroughly examined by a competent person. The examination is required to determine if the design, construction and condition of the lift is such that the lift can continue to be safely used. A written report of the examination has to be made and given to the owner of the lift. If the examination has revealed that repairs are required, this must be stated, together with any time limits in which the repairs have to be made.

Passenger lifts are required to be examined every six months and goods lifts every twelve months, or alternatively at intervals detailed in an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person based on an assessment of risks.

The lift should be regularly serviced by a reputable maintenance company (approximately every three months). The service report provided should relate to the efficient working of the lift and is not a substitute for the thorough examination mentioned above. Any remedial work identified should receive prompt attention.

The safety steps given below will reduce the risk of accidents caused by or at lifts and you may find them useful as a safety checklist.

STEP 1 Ensure that the lift is thoroughly examined by a competent person (generally this will be an engineering surveyor) and carry out any remedial work which may be required.

STEP 2 Ensure that the lift is regularly serviced by a reputable company. The maintenance contract should include the removal of rubbish and debris from the lift shaft as it may contribute to the risk of a fire.

STEP 3 Develop a system for rescuing people trapped in the lift car and where this is to be carried out by your staff, provide adequate training on this procedure. Written rescue procedures should be displayed at appropriate locations.

STEP 4 Ensure that the alarm bell activated in the lift car can be heard by persons who are aware of the appropriate action to take.

STEP 5 Ensure that there is adequate lighting at all lift landings to reduce the risk of persons tripping or falling. Ensure that within the lift car, there is emergency lighting which is activated in the event of a mains power failure.

STEP 6 Ensure that the lift plant room door is secured and locked in order to prevent unauthorised access. A notice indicating that access is restricted should be placed on the door. The key to the plant room and the lift landing doors should be kept in a secure position, controlled by a responsible person and be available at all times.

STEP 7 Ensure that unauthorised persons cannot open the landing doors to the lift shaft unless the lift car is level with the landing floor.

STEP 8 Inform people not to use the lifts during a fire evacuation e.g. by placing a sufficient number of notices in conspicuous places and where available by public address system announcements.

case study

Stockroom workers in a large department store regularly used a makeshift key to gain access to the lift shaft to determine the whereabouts of the lift car. On one occasion a shop assistant walked through the unattended, open landing doors expecting the lift to be there. She fell into the lift shaft and broke her leg.