



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 lift.

Legally all lifts require periodic inspection by a competent person who must provide documentation to the lift owner regarding the design, construction and condition of the installation, and note any remedial work required in order of priority (this must be done every 6 months for passenger lifts and 12 months for goods lifts). The required works must receive prompt attention.

The lift should also be regularly serviced by a maintenance company (approximately every 3 months). The service report provided should relate to the efficient working of the lift and is not a substitute for the periodic inspection mentioned above. Again any remedial work identified should receive prompt attention.

The simple safety steps given below will prevent most of the accidents caused by lifts and you may find them useful as a safety checklist.

STEP 1 Ensure that the lift is inspected periodically by a competent person (generally this will be an insurance surveyor) and carry out all remedial work as required.

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

STEP 3 Ensure that the alarm bell which warns that someone is trapped in the lift can be heard by a responsible person at all times.

STEP 4 Devise a procedure for rescuing people trapped in the lift and train staff in how to follow this procedure.

STEP 5 Provide adequate lighting to all lift landings in order to minimise the risk of tripping and falling when entering and leaving the lift car. Provide emergency lighting to all lift cars, designed to come into operation in the event of a power failure.

STEP 6 Ensure that the lift plant room door is kept locked in order to prevent unauthorised access. A warning notice restricting access should be placed on the door. The key to the plant room door and to the lift landing door should be kept by a responsible person in a secure position but should be readily accessible 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 conspicuous notices outside lift landing doors and by public address system announcements.

case study

Stockroom workers in a large drapery store regularly used a make shift 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.