

Lifting Equipment

Equipment used for lifting and/or lowering people or objects at work falls under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER). The 'duty holder' (who could be the owner, manager, supervisor etc) has a legal responsibility to ensure that the lift is safe to use. To do this, all lifts must have a routine thorough examination by a competent person.

Thorough Examination

- Thorough examination should not be confused with preventive maintenance. A thorough examination is a detailed examination of the lift and all its associated equipment, carried out systematically. The examination may detect any defects that are, or might become dangerous. These can then be remedied before an accident occurs.
- The competent person determines the scope of the thorough examination by assessing the risks, considering the factors such as where the lift will be used, the frequency of use, the age and condition, and the weight of loads to be lifted etc.
- The thorough inspection may be supplemented with an inspection. Inspections may be done in-house by a competent, trained employee and would normally include visual and functional checks e.g. that the alarm interlocks operate correctly and lift doors cannot be opened from the landing side.
- Preventive maintenance usually involves replacing worn or damaged parts, topping up fluid levels and making routine adjustments to ensure risks are avoided.
- All lifts must be thoroughly examined:
 - After substantial and significant changes have been made
 - At least every 6 months if the lift is used at any time to carry people, every 12 months if it only carried loads, or more frequently in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by the competent person; and

- Following 'exceptional circumstances' such as damage to, or failure of, the lift, long periods out of use or a major change in operating conditions that is likely to affect the integrity of the equipment.

Dutyholder's Role

- As the dutyholder, you have the following legal responsibilities:
 - Maintaining the lift so that it is safe to use;
 - Selecting and instructing the competent person
 - Ensuring that the lift is examined at the correct intervals.
 - Keeping the competent person informed of any changes in the lift operating conditions, which may affect the risk assessment.
 - Making the relevant documentation available to the competent person, e.g. manufacturers instructions and maintenance records
 - Acting promptly to remedy any defects. If you are notified of a serious and significant defect you should immediately take the lift out of operation until it has been remedied.
 - Ensuring that all documentation complies with the Regulations.

Competent Person

- A competent person is someone who has sufficient technical and practical knowledge of the lift to be able to detect any defects and assess how significant they are.
- The competent person must be independent and impartial to allow them to make an objective assessment of the lift. It is not advisable for the same person who performs routine maintenance to carry out the thorough examination, as they are then responsible for assessing their own work.
- The competent person may be someone from within your own organisation or from an external company. They must understand the requirements of the law and what is meant by a thorough examination. The competence of an inspection body is indicated by accreditation by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service to the relevant standard BS EN45004. Most insurance companies can recommend accredited inspecting organisations.

Documentation

- Following the thorough examination, the competent person is legally required to send you a written and signed report of the thorough examination as soon as practicable. This should normally be within 28 days if the lift is free from serious defects.
- If the competent person identifies a defect which presents an 'existing or imminent risk of serious personal injury' they must send a copy of the report to the enforcing authority.
- Schedule 1 of LOLER specifies the information that reports must contain. In summary it should:
 - Identify the equipment examined (serial number, make, etc) and the employer and the premises;
 - Give the date of the last thorough examination and specify when the next one should take place;
 - Specify the safe working load of the lift;
 - Give the reason for the thorough examination (i.e. following installation, according to an examination scheme, statutory interval, etc);
 - Identify any defect which is or may become a danger to people;
 - Give the details of any repair, renewal or alteration required to remedy the defect and the date by which it should be undertaken;
 - Give details of any tests carried out;
 - Give details of the person carrying out the report and the person validating the report on their behalf.

Record Keeping

You must keep reports of thorough examination for consideration by health and safety inspectors for at least two years or until the next report, whichever is longer.

Further Information

Available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA tel: 01787 881165.)

 The health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

- 📖 Safe use of lifting equipment: The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved code of practice L113 HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1628 2
- 📖 Safe use of work equipment: Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved code of practice and guidance Second edition L22 HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1626 6
- 📖 Specification for the testing and inspection of electric and hydraulic lifts BS 5655:Part 10 1986
- 📖 British Standards are available for BSI Customer Services, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL. Tel: 020 8996 9001
- 📖 Guidelines on the thorough examination and testing of lifts (SAFed lifts guidelines) LG1 Safety Assessment Federation 1998 ISBN 1901212 35 1

Available from: Safety Assessment Federation Ltd, Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford, Butlers Wharf, London, SE1 2NY