



# SAFE WORKING ON LIFTS - THE BUILDING OWNERS PERSPECTIVE

By Ish Buckingham

The new BS 7255 - Safe Working on Lifts is in the final stages of the production process and should be available for industry use later this year.

BS 7255 is a Code of Practice for 'Safe Working on Lifts' and was first published in 1989. Readers will be aware that 'Codes of Practice' are based upon recommendations and it is not unlawful to disregard them. However, in the event of legal proceedings, it is likely that the court will take account of compliance with, or disregard of any relevant 'Codes of Practice'.

The Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, Section 4(2) states: "It shall be the duty of each person who has, to any extent, control of premises ..... Or of any plant .... In such premises to take such measures as it is reasonably practicable, that the premises .... And any plant in the premises .....Is or are safe and without risk to health".

The Health and Safety Executive commend the use of BS 7255 to those who have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant Health and Safety legislation.

The new 'Code of Practice' applies to ALL lifts, irrespective of type of drive employed and not solely to those lifts constructed and installed to British standards.

So lets take a look at some of the areas covered by the new 'Code of Practice' - remembering that the Public Comment process may result in changes to the Draft document.

## Safety of persons working on lifts.

The safety of persons working on lifts is the responsibility of all persons associated with such work, particularly:

- a) Owners and/or persons who have effective control of the premises containing the lift(s);
- b) The employers and supervisors of those working on lifts;
- c) The persons working on lifts;
- d) Employees of the other employers also working in those premises;

And will largely be dependent upon the care and attention being paid by those parties to the provisions and procedures described in this code as appropriate to them.

A crucial element in securing safe working is the initial training given to personnel, backed by subsequent experience and additional training for particular aspects of the work. All of the foregoing should be subject to regular review for the identification of training needs.

## Scope

BS 7255 describes recommended safe working provisions and practices (supported by training) for owners and/or persons who have effective control of the premises and those responsible for, and involved in, the design, installation, thorough examination, inspection, testing, service/maintenance, repair and dismantling of permanently installed lifts serving defined landing levels.

The recommendations relate to the safety of persons when gaining access to and from the work area on a lift installation and whilst working there; they also relate to the safety of others present in the vicinity, whether working or not, who may be endangered by the actions of those working on lifts.

## Safety Management: owner's responsibilities

### Training

It should be ensured that all employees on the premises understand the meaning of signs displayed in lift areas or when lifts are being worked on.

There are two levels of signage which may be encountered by employees in a building; those displayed whilst employees occupy tenant areas and those when employees enter restricted areas under supervision.

All persons who, might at any time be working on the lift or related equipment, or be working within the lift well, pit, machine room or pulley room, or carrying out risk assessments, should possess demonstrable competence in basic lift safety and procedures, or be under relevant supervision.

Where any risk assessment identifies a need, clear written instructions relating to site emergency and first aid procedures should be issued to employees, visitors, contractors and other authorized persons. Any special regulations applying to the premises should also be included in these instructions.

Where such instructions are complex and/or special



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risks exist, these instructions may need to be supplemented by a specific “site safety awareness” training regime.

Adequate training should be provided to those persons authorized to carry out the safe release of trapped passengers.

It is essential that the competency of all trained persons is assessed and certified annually. Certification should list the competencies achieved relating to the type of equipment upon which the training was carried out.

### Safe working

Any work carried out on lifts should only be performed by authorized persons.

A person should be appointed by the owner or the site person in charge; whose responsibilities should include the following:

- (a) familiarization with the relevant parts of the site safety assessment undertaken by the contractor;
- (b) familiarization with the work site at the commencement of the work, including the effect the work is likely to have on other persons in the area;
- (c) directing and managing the work safely;
- (d) ensuring that the work site is handed back to the client in a safe condition on completion of the work.

The contractor and owner should, through risk assessment, plan and execute the work on the lift(s), such that risk to employees and the public is minimized (including any risk due to other activities in the area).

Before starting work or taking the lift(s) out of service, the owner’s site representative should be advised. The site person in charge of the works on the lift(s) should establish contact with such representatives in order that emergency assistance can be summoned if required. It should also be determined whether any special precautions or procedures need to be taken e.g.: because of the presence of children in the vicinity, the nature of the building or its occupancy.

It should be ensured that following the installation or major modernization of a lift that the safety file

is available to persons who work on the lift(s). The file should indicate the major considerations of the installation process, the servicing and maintenance requirements, any special operations where a particular method needs to be adopted and specific instruction for the dismantling and disposal of the installation at the end of its working life.

A representative of the owner should be nominated, to summon emergency assistance if required and to advise on special precautions or procedures required, due to the works being undertaken within the premises.

The owner should provide, specialized protective equipment or clothing, to ensure the health and safety of operatives, when exposed to harmful processes or substances encountered in the premises.

Safe means of access to and egress from all work places should be provided.

Adequate illumination and emergency lighting (where necessary) to all work places should be provided.

Suitable access equipment should be provided as necessary, to ensure that all work places can be reached with safety.

The consequences of any effects to the occupants of the premises, arising from the lift works, should be controlled.

It should be ensured that all work places are safe to accommodate the work activity being undertaken and to accommodate all operatives together with their necessary working equipment.

Arrangements should be made between the owner and the lift contractor for:

- \* safe access to all tools, equipment and materials at the work places:
- \* the provision of suitable and clearly identified storage space for tools, equipment, materials and any portable access equipment:
- \* the provision of alternative access routes as may become necessary during the works being undertaken.

The location of keys for authorized persons to gain access to work places should be made known.



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The details of any permits to work, which may be required, and the conditions imposed by them, should be made known.

Details of any changes to the risks, which may be encountered during the progress of the works and which become apparent from subsequent risk assessments, should be recorded and made known to the responsible person appointed by the owner or site person in charge.

It should be ensured that all appropriate safety signs are displayed when the lift(s) are removed from service.

Access to machine rooms should be restricted to authorized persons, or persons under the supervision of authorized persons.

Effective control should be imposed over all contractors, 'for example by the issue of permits to work', who may require access to the work places.

There should be a safe system of work for all those undertaking tasks within the designated work places. It is considered that such a safe system of work would include the provision of "lock-off" devices on all electrical isolators.

A procedure for the avoidance of the build up of waste materials in lift wells should be implemented.

It is essential that special procedures are agreed for the control and disposal of waste and other items and substances which may be injurious to health and safety.

Examples include, used hypodermic needles, human wastes, radioactive materials.

### Risk assessment

The development of the necessary safety measures should be implemented wherever practical and appropriate. Improvements should be undertaken which could improve the safety of those persons engaged in the works or using the lifts.

It is essential that any recommendations issued by the manufacturers, competent persons, or enforcing authorities are acted upon.

All works should be planned in advance, in order to eliminate or reduce to a controllable level, the risks to

those persons undertaking the works and all persons who may be affected by them.

The owner should plan the works, where appropriate, to coincide with the "shut-down" period of hazardous processes or for when public areas are less busy or closed.

### Well-being of persons working alone

The owner should ensure that the following procedures are adopted:

- (a) before commencing work the authorized person should register their presence with the owner's site representative and makes suitable arrangements to ensure that their continued well-being is periodically confirmed.
- (b) the person checking the well-being of an authorized person working alone, should have knowledge of how to organize assistance in the event of emergency.
- (c) the arrangements and frequency for confirming an authorized person's continued well-being should be defined in the relevant safe working procedure.

An authorized person should not work alone where a risk assessment identifies specific hazards (e.g. the absence of a car top control station) in which case the authorized person should be accompanied by another person who has received appropriate instruction.

No authorized person should be required work alone in unoccupied premises, unless the well-being of that person is periodically monitored.

The draft BS 7255 contains many more recommendations which relate to the building owner or managers; readers will have to wait for the final document to be published before the full extent of the code can be considered. In the meantime, I feel that it would be prudent for owners and those responsible for the effective control of premises containing lifts to review their current systems and training regimes as soon as possible. □