



BS7255: 2001 CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SAFE WORKING ON LIFTS

It has been a long time in the making but at long last it has arrived! BS7255: 2001 Code of Practice for Safe Working on Lifts has now hit our desks. Sadly that means that a number of sales staff will soon be telling clients that BS7255 is law – one hopes that the Managing Directors of the lift companies will be getting hold of them and advising them that it is not law before this happens! It is, of course, recommended that you comply. The fact is, even though it is not law, it is a published document by a recognized authority and one could argue that by complying one is contributing to compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act. The strength of the argument was tested in a case in 1994 where the judge was quite clear that whilst BS7255: 1989 was not law it was the best available information to the industry at that time. I anticipate that most judges would take a similar viewpoint but one cannot be sure!

In addition, it is not a harmonized document, i.e. it is parochial to the UK which is indicated by its designation as a “BS” and not a European Norm “EN” such as EN81.

As a result of the introduction of BS7255: 2001, which was prepared by Technical Sub-committee MHE/4/1 of British Standards, BS7255: 1989 is withdrawn.

There were 8 reasons for the introduction of a replacement version and these were as follows:

- awareness of hazards and therefore taking more care over their actions.
- Employers and owners now positively striving to provide ever safer workplaces.
- Changes in UK legislation.
- The emergence of Harmonized European Standards, in particular BS EN81-1, BS EN81-2 and BS EN81-3.
- The trend away from prescriptive clauses (e.g. provisions and procedures) towards risk assessment methodology as the basis for determining safe systems of work.
- The delineation of responsibilities for safety management, between the owner and the lift industry itself.
- Changes in training requirements.

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Following an apprenticeship with The British Railways ODM department, he was employed as a Staff Engineer with Kone Marryatt & Scott and then as a District Engineer Surveyor with British Engine Insurance, before taking up his present position. David Has written numerous papers and journal articles on lift & escalator systems and safety, he is also an active member of many professional institutes. His current activities relating to lifts & escalators include being a member of British Standards Lift & Escalator Committees MHE/4 & MHE/4/3 and also a member of the CIBSE Lift Group. He has spoken on lift related topics at the conferences of The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers, The Association of Supervisory & Executive Engineers, The Institute of Plant Engineers, various Regional Conferences of The Engineering Council and served as Chairman on the escalator session of The International Association of Elevator Engineers ELEVCON'93 Conference at Vienna. In 1993 he was elected to the eighteen strong Executive Council of The Institute of Executive Engineers which has a membership of over 4000, he now serves as a Director. He is a member of The National Association of Vertical Transportation Professionals in the USA as well as being a member of The International Association of Elevator Engineers. Having had papers published in “Elevator World” and “Elevatori” he now writes a regular column on safety in “Elevation”.

- The need to have a code of practice which covers lifts of any age, whether or not they conform to current British or European standards.

The standard is quite neatly split into two major sections, namely:

- Responsibilities of owners
- Responsibilities of persons working on lifts.

Over the next few editions of Elevation I will be looking at the separate sections of the new standard and debating issues with you.

And just to set the ball rolling I would draw your



attention to clause 4.7.6 of the new standard which says:

“Accurate electrical and hydraulic circuit and schematic diagrams for each lift installation should be available for maintenance personnel”.

Ironically this clause falls into the owners responsibilities section! It now seems that when a maintenance contractor takes over a contract that the owner might have to ask them to sign for the receipt of drawings etc. It seems a shame to have to go down that route but I do have an internal memo on file from one large contractor who quite clearly have a policy of removing drawings from site when they lose a contract – no doubt if it went to court they would advise that the supervisor who wrote the memo was acting under his own volition – perhaps that’s why it’s fortunate that I have more than one version of the same memo but written by different members of staff from the same company on file! Undoubtedly this will prompt a number of you to write to me with your opinions which, as always, will be welcome. Perhaps the discussion should not only centre on the availability of the drawings but also the first word in the quoted clause, i.e. “accurate”.□
