



Lift & Escalator Owner News

Subject: Digital switch – warning about lift alarm calls

In recent months there has been an increase in technical support requests, related to lift alarms, across our industry; implying that many issues are still present related to the digital switch. Information to lift owners remains limited from BT Openreach meaning that lift owners may be at risk of not knowing if, or when, their analogue telephone lines (with copper conductors) will be replaced by fibre connections. Many lift maintenance providers are already installing GSM systems to cover any loss in telephone coverage, but with over 10 million analogue lines still to be replaced an increased rate of work by BT Openreach may impact where any GSM system has not yet been installed.

BT Openreach has used Salisbury as it's trial first "Full Fibre City", however the up-take of changing from analogue to digital lines has been far slower than anticipated leading to a change in approach. We have heard reports of 'reducing internet speed' over analogue lines to promote users changing fibre lines. <https://www.openreach.com/news>.

We have also heard of other measures to discourage the use of analogue lines, with some calls made over analogue lines having "root credit control" [check here for IP steering group](#) put in place which means that any call made to a chargeable number, such as a lift maintenance provider, will be diverted to the billing team of the communication provider. These billing teams are unlikely to have the knowledge or understanding to be able to answer or deal with an alarm call where persons may be trapped within a lift car.

Communication providers, such as BT, Virgin Media and others face, a continued challenge to raising the awareness of building owners and to ensure that sufficient information is given to all parties where analogue lines are still installed.

What do building/lift owners need to do?

The telephone line is typically the responsibility of the building/lift owner (not the lift maintenance company) but it is urged that lift maintenance providers advise building owners that there may be a risk to the lift alarm system where analogue lines remain installed. Those responsible for buildings need to take action:

1. Talk to your communication provider to understand the changes to your line and when it will happen.
2. Check with your lift maintenance company for advice on equipment that can be fitted. At present, this will typically be a GSM solution incorporating a battery-backup. Since 2G and 3G are also due to be withdrawn in the coming years, we recommend a 4G solution, including SIM card.

Further information

BT Openreach factsheet: [Industry \(openreach.com\)](#)

LEIA article: [Lift-Escalator-Owner-News-Digital-switch.pdf \(leia.co.uk\)](#)

LEIA article: [Analogue telephone shutdown and migration to VOIP-based services](#)

LEIA article: [Telephone lines and lifts](#) - background information.