

Lift & Escalator Owner News

Subject: Telescopic Ladders

As early as the 1980s it has been recognised that firefighters should be provided with a means to access the car roof through a trap door in the car ceiling, but it wasn't until BS EN 81-72:2005 when firefighters were able to "self-rescue". The size of lift cars and the areas in which ladders could be stored were often too small for the height of ladders carried by the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). This led to lift manufacturers storing ladders inside the lift car, typically of a telescopic kind, and in discrete locations above the false ceiling. The same or similar types of ladder are then used to reach the nearest lift landing door to egress the well in the event the lift could not be moved.



Ladders, including telescopic ladders, should be in conformity to BS EN 131, which covers all types of portable ladders and aims to improve ladder safety by making ladders wider, stronger and sturdier. To meet BS EN 131, ladders are designed and tested to take a maximum total load* of 150 kg, including the user, their tools, equipment and any materials.

*Maximum Total Load: the maximum weight the ladder is designed to support when set up in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Ladders that conform to this standard should then display the "CE mark and EN 131".

If ladders are installed that were compliant with obsolete and withdrawn standards (such as BS 2037 and BS 1129), these ladders may continue to be used if they are still in good condition. However, if these ladders are worn out or damaged, they should be replaced with ladders that meet the latest BS EN 131 standard.

It has been reported that some telescopic ladders originating from China are being issued in the UK claiming to conform to the relevant standards. These do not meet the specific requirements and are displaying incorrect markings (CE and conformity to BS EN 131). These present a serious risk of injury as they can bend excessively when under load.

[Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

Manufacturers and Installers are urged to ensure ladders supplied meet the requirements of BS EN 131 within their Quality Assurance Scheme. If they are concerned about the conformity, they should request a copy of the Product Conformity assessment to ensure they can be used within the GB market and they are safe for users.