LEIA Safety Information Sheet

Tool Tethering

Prepared by the LEIA Safety & Environmental Committee

SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET
TOOL TETHERING

PREAMBLE

This Information Sheet is one of a series produced by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee on topics relevant to the Lift and Escalator Industry. Whilst every effort has been taken in the production of these sheets, it must be acknowledged that they should be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation, codes of practice etc. They should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law but guidance to it.

INTRODUCTION – SAFETY ISSUES

This Safety Information Sheet deals with issues associated with tool tethering and covers a number of aspects that should be considered prior to and during work on lift and escalator equipment. As with any other type of work, the hazards must first be assessed by risk assessment in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The overriding aim is to protect employees, sub-contractors, customers, and the general public and seek to comply with legal requirements and best practice.

TOOL USE AND TETHERING OVERVIEW

Both service and installation operatives will utilise a wide range of hand tools and handheld portable appliances in the course of their activities whilst working on lift and escalator equipment. The operatives will also be working in areas where entrapment and entanglement hazards exist associated with the fixed or moving parts of the equipment and/or their controlled movement of the equipment during their work activities. It is therefore essential that all tools, equipment, and PPE are retained in safe locations and conditions to minimise the risk of being drawn into the moving parts of equipment and/or being snagged by fixed components whilst on the move.

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Installers and service providers must follow the detailed installation and servicing instructions recommended by the manufacturer, and in addition, make a suitable and sufficient assessment of any reasonably foreseeable risks - identifying controls that mitigate these risks as far as is reasonably practicable. Any risk reduction method must follow a logical hierarchy of control.

Hierarchy of control

Applying a hierarchy of control methodology to all reasonably foreseeable hazards identified during the risk assessment process requires assessors of risk to prioritise those measures that provide the greatest risk reduction, and where possible, risk elimination. Control measures are prioritised in the following order:

- Elimination – removal of the risk at source

- Reduction – reducing the severity and frequency of exposure

- Isolation – the use of engineering controls to guard / separate the risk from the individual

- Control – apply safe systems of work based on suitably assessed risk assessments

- PPE – Personal protective measures applied where residual risks have not been eliminated

- Discipline – Robust delivery and supervision of safe systems of work

Avoidance of Tool Tethering as a Control Measure

As elimination of tools or material use is not practicably an option, operatives must strive to select controls as high up the hierarchy as possible as a priority.

- Reduction – Lift and escalator operations are limited to only trained and competent employees and subcontractors, with a maximum of two operatives per hoistway (Lifts only).

- Isolation – All lift hoistways are fully enclosed with a combination of entrance doors, gates, fully enclosed hoardings, or scaffold barriers compliant to TG20 with debris protection where required, eliminating the potential for tools or materials falling outside of the confines of the lift hoistway. All escalator operations define a designated clear space below any defined work activity area ensuring that all potential falling object hazards are retained within a clear space zone.

- Control – All operations follow documented risk assessments and safe systems of work based on manufacturer equipment requirements. The safe systems of work must detail that "Simultaneous work must not be conducted in the hoistway or on the escalator by operatives or others, where individuals or groups would be working independently of each other and/or where the workers are stacked (i.e. above/below each other)". Clear space zones are to be clearly designated and controlled.

- PPE – Identified personal protective equipment must be utilised in line with the safe systems of work however, tool tethering lanyards are not considered to offer an adequate reduction in risk over and above the established control measures. In fact, tool tethering adds additional risks in terms of hoisting, rigging, top of car operation, running platform/false car and escalator equipment movement entrapment.

- Discipline – Site activities should be subject to a range of inspections and audits to ensure that the established safe systems of work are followed. Where variance is identified, corrective actions should be planned to ensure competence and compliance is maintained.

SUMMARY

- Always risk assess your work activities, considering the risk of falling objects.

- Always ensure you maintain a controlled clear space below your work activities.

- Always ensure you have fixed measures to retain falling objects within the clear space.

- Never work below operatives where there is the potential for material or tooling falling object hazards.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any clarification of this information sheet there are various websites that provide advice and guidance on tool tethering.