

SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

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.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires:-

Section 2 (1) That it is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.

In particular:-

- Section 2 (2) (a) The provision and maintenance of plant and safe systems of work.*
- (2) (b) Arrangements for safety in the handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.*
- (2) (c) The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision.*
- (2) (d) That any place, under the employer's control, is safe, and that a safe means of access and egress are provided.*
- (2) (e) The provision of a safe working environment and adequate facilities for employees welfare.*

Further:-

- Section 2 (3) The employer is required to provide a written statement of his company's policy with respect to the Health and Safety at Work of his employees.*
- Section 3 (1) This places a duty on employers that persons other than his employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.*

The essence of the legislation is that employers are expected to manage hazards with the same degree of attention and with the same allocation of resources and priorities, as they manage other management objectives such as quality control and budgetary matters. To this end the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out broad principles which employers are required to follow.

Further reference can also be made to Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the LEIA Generic Risk Assessment and Site Safety Survey, and the LEIA Site Handbook.

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK

A safe system of work is a process whereby a given task is examined to identify all the hazards involved and assess the risks. The results can be documented and a planned/formal 'safe working system' can be developed and implemented

When designing safe systems of work within the Lift Industry, consideration needs to be given to the hazards that may be encountered on a particular contract.

There are 5 key elements that should always be considered when designing a safe system of work: -

- 1) Assess the Task to be undertaken
- 2) Hazard identification & Risk Assessment
- 3) Identify the safe methods to undertake the task
- 4) Implement the safe system(s)
- 5) Monitor the system that you have put in place for undertaking the task

1) Assess the Task to be undertaken

The task to be undertaken should be examined and documented so that it can be examined to identify where issues arise. This should be done in conjunction with supervisors/managers and the workforce who are actually undertaking the work. This should ensure that all factors involved in completing the task are considered.

2) Hazard identification & Risk Assessment

As should be well known, there is a requirement for employers to identify hazards and assess risks – with regards to the Lift Industry please reference the LEIA information sheet on the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and generic risk assessment; and if further information is required, the HSE website also gives good guidance on risk assessment and how to go about it.

In identifying the hazards, special consideration should be given to the following, many of which apply equally to installation and service activities: -

Safe Access - To and from the place of work bearing in mind engineers may be carrying tools and be required to climb ladders.

Safe Place of Work:

Machine Room

- Adequate lighting.
- Should be used solely for the purpose of lift and escalator equipment.
- Guarding should be fitted to equipment where necessary.
- Floor to be clean and in good condition with no tripping points.
- Any trap doors remaining open should be guarded and if when closed they form part of an access way, they should be constructed to support foreseeable loadings.
- All electrical switches to be identified.
- Any ancillary power point should be suitable for intended purposes.
- Rubber mats placed at appropriate position.
- Sufficient space to work around the controller, etc.
- Any conductor that remains LIVE after the main supply has been isolated must be clearly labelled, (temporary shrouding and insulated tools should be used to avoid electrical shock.)
- Hole dimensions, where ropes pass from the machine room to the lift well should be kept to a minimum.
- Any lifting devices must have a certificate of test and examination before use.

Lift Well

- Adequate lighting.
- Adequate headroom; if insufficient, a reduced clearance sign must be fitted to the car top adjacent to the car top control station.
- Access ladder to pit to be in good condition and fit for use.

- Props for hydraulic lifts to be available for use and safety signs fitted in the pit.
- At any place where a person could fall and be hurt, suitable precautions should be taken. (For voids around the lift car refer to the LEIA Information Sheet on Voids.)
- Adequate landing protection is available and used when doors are opened.
- Car top control station fitted to car top.
- Consideration should be taken of unexpected movement of door operating machinery.
- Pit stop switch to be fitted in a location for operation prior to access to pit.
- Counterweight screens should be provided in the pit to guard against the hazard of a descending counterweight.
- Separation screens should be provided when more than one lift shares a common well.

Landing Entrances

- Special consideration should be given to use of the building. The landing entrance is often part of the main access route into, out of, and all around the building, therefore consideration should be given to the building users, e.g. residents with pets who use the lifts to allow the pets outside; buildings where wheelchair users reside, or access daily.

The above items are referred in the Codes of Practice for safe working, BS 7255, Lifts, BS7801, Escalators, BS9102 Platform Lifts and Safety Rules for the construction and installation of lifts, BS EN81-20, . In addition special thought needs to be given to any risks to health and safety created by the client or others, e.g. hazardous substances, noise etc.

3) Identify the safe methods to undertake the task

When the results of the task assessment, the hazard identification and risk assessment are reviewed, a safe system should be able to be identified and developed. This could be both office and site based to ensure that all possibilities and input can be obtained.

4) Implement the safe system(s)

The safe system should be documented and issued to those supervising the task and to those actually undertaking it. All of those involved with the system should understand it and their role within it.

All persons involved should still be able to provide further input if necessary if further information becomes available or site conditions change.

5) Monitor the system that you have put in place for undertaking the task

It is the employer's duty to organise a safe system of work that would protect his employees from all risks that are foreseeable. If site conditions or other situation causes a potential deviation or difference from the safe system, work MUST stop. All parties involved with the safe system should review and make necessary changes and implement them. Further monitoring should continue and review as/if necessary.

It is important that safe systems of work are under constant review to reflect changed circumstances, new legislation etc and that employees are kept informed.

It is strongly recommended that standards mentioned above are consulted with regard to protection against some of the hazards and risks commonly experienced by those working on lifts.

Whilst it is the employer's duty to design a safe system of work for his employers, the law also imposes duties on others to ensure the safety of persons not employed by him.

Section 3-1 of the Health & Safety at Work Act states that it shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.

For any clarification of this information sheet contact your company Safety Advisor or the LEIA Safety and Training Manager.