

Lift & Escalator Industry Association

33-34 Devonshire Street London W1G 6PY

Tel: 020 7935 3013 Fax: 020 7935 3321

E-mail: enquiries@leia.co.uk

Website: www.leia.co.uk

14th September 2007

To: All Members

**cc: The Quality and Technical Committee (Code No. 729)
The Maintenance Committee**

Dear Member,

**SAFETY BULLETIN FROM HSE
POSSIBLE SAFETY ISSUE WITH PLATFORM LIFTS**

Please find attached a copy of a Safety Bulletin issued by HSE in connection with a possible trapping hazard to operators and passengers on certain platform lifts.

You will find the bulletin to be self-explanatory and we would advise you to be guided accordingly.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert N Lee'.

Robert N Lee
Director, Technical Services



Lift and Escalator Industry Association
33/34 Devonshire Street
LONDON
W1G 6PY



Field Operations Directorate

Iain Evans
HM Inspector of Health & Safety

5N.3 Redgrave Court
Merton Road
Bootle
L20 7HS

Tel: 0151 951 3413
Fax: 0151 951 4127
iain.evans@hse.gov.uk

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Principal Inspector:
Mr Andy Gay

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Reference 4079499

POSSIBLE SAFETY ISSUE WITH PLATFORM LIFTS

HSE has recently investigated a potential safety issue with a platform lift manufactured within Europe. It is the opinion of HSE that this lift failed to comply with the Machinery Directive. Suitable control measures have now been identified and the risk eliminated or reduced. Concern was expressed by the manufacturer that a similar risk exists with a large number of platform lifts from other manufacturers. As a representative of some UK lifting platform manufacturers, could you please distribute this letter to relevant Association members.

Description of the risk

A disabled lifting platform with a "screw and nut" drive system was installed between two floors of a public building in the UK. Once installed, the customer arranged for the lift to be thoroughly examined by a competent person, as required by UK legislation (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998). The lift failed to pass the thorough examination due a finger-trapping risk being identified. The issue was passed to the Health and Safety Executive, who are responsible for enforcing safety standards for work-related equipment in Great Britain.

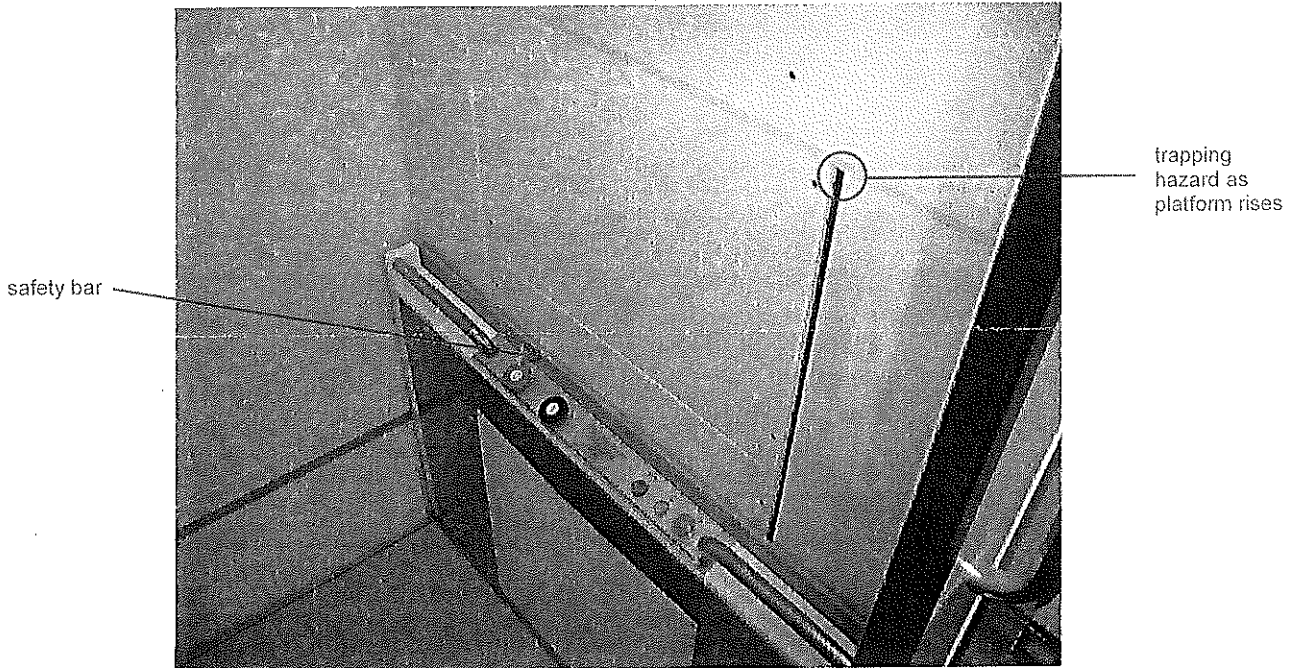
It was found that a trapping hazard existed for an operator or passenger in the lift. Two vertical grooves were present on the inside of the liftway enclosure. These grooves were of sufficient width to allow a finger to be inserted inside. As the lift rises, a trapping hazard was created between the top of the groove and the leading edge of the control panel (*see photograph*).

The hazard had been identified by the manufacturer, who installed a pressure-sensitive bar across the top edge of the control panel. This bar would stop the lift from rising in the event of activation. However, the switch did not stop the lift from rising in sufficient time to prevent the possibility of a minor crush injury to a finger. Similarly, releasing the hold-to-run controls would also fail to stop the lift in sufficient time.

Despite the lift receiving type approval within the EU, it was the opinion of HSE that this lift did not meet the requirements of the Machinery Directive 98/37/EC (as amended), section 1.3.7, in that the risks from moving machinery had not been adequately controlled. Moreover, whilst not a legal requirement,

the lift did not comply with British Standard BS 6440:1999, section 5.1 due to the trapping risk, and section 7.4.2 in that the gaps in the enclosure wall exceeded 6mm.

The risk of a finger being inserted into the gap is increased by the potential use of the product by members of the general public, people with danger-perception difficulties and children.



Consequences

HSE approached the manufacturer and UK supplier, and a variety of control measures were suggested. These included extension of the grooves above the maximum control panel height to eliminate the trapping hazard, and the use of a plastic guard on the top of the groove to cause the safety switch to activate before a trapping risk occurs, and the lift to stop in sufficient time.

Recommendations

Platform manufactures should examine the design of their lifts to see if a similar risk is present. Control measures should be implemented to eliminate or reduce the risks as appropriate, following the principles and hierarchy published in the Machinery Directive.

The supply of machinery to Great Britain which is unsafe and which does not comply with the Machinery Directive is an offence under Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and Regulation 12 of the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992.

If you require any further information on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Evans
HM Inspector of Health and Safety