



Are You Aware? No. 71 rev 0

Subject: Decommissioning, dismantling and removal of lifts

Decommissioning, dismantling and removal work is very often carried out without the involvement of lift companies who would be best placed to appreciate the hazards involved. Where members become aware that these activities are being undertaken, they should strongly recommend that specialists with suitable lift knowledge are used to do this work.

Decommissioning

Where a lift is no longer required and is taken out of service but not removed, e.g. still attached to its means of suspension with the possibility of falling, or where the landing doors have been left in place, there are clearly certain hazards. The risks from these, without attention, will increase over time.

Some of these risks can be mitigated e.g. landing doors can be bolted shut to avoid misuse and unauthorised access into the lift well, or lift cars can be lowered onto their buffers to prevent falling. However, other hazards might still be present e.g. risk of falling if the car or lift well is still accessible, or falling of the counterweight if the car is buffered, or uncontrolled movement. Even where action has been taken, residual risks could remain.

Where these risks are present, as identified by the building owner's/ responsible person's risk assessment, the lift should have at least a caretaker maintenance cover provided (typically two visits each year) and be subject to Thorough Examinations as under LOLER.

Dismantling and removal

BS 7255 2012 Code of practice for safe working on lifts includes the following requirements.

E.7 Dismantling

Before an installation is dismantled, a risk assessment should be carried out to determine the risks and a method statement agreed to control those risks. Items of equipment should always be lowered under control and should not be allowed to free-fall.

Even after decommissioning, many hazards remain and the risks can be greatly increased with an inappropriate sequence for dismantling. The methods used to remove the old lift equipment are likely to have their own hazards. The old lift equipment may have hazards, other than the generic hazards associated with lifts, and they should be covered by the owner's safety file which should be reviewed. Therefore the risk assessment should take into account the characteristics of the lift equipment, the intended method for dismantling, the constraints of the particular site.

It is therefore obvious that lift dismantling and removal must only be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor and after site specific risk assessment.

All of the lift equipment should be removed and the lift well and machinery spaces made safe. Any disused equipment not removed presents potential hazards and, in the case that a new lift is to be installed, redundant equipment must be removed.