LEIA Safety Information Sheet

Safety at Lift Landings

Prepared by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee

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Contents

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

This Guidance Note is intended to assist persons responsible for making arrangements for repair, maintenance or examination of lifts and also those persons carrying out such repair, maintenance or examination.

One very important safety feature of lift design is the interlocking of landing doors or gates so as to:

a. prevent any landing door or gate being opened except when the lift car or platform is effectively at the landing, and,
b. prevent a car or platform being moved away from any landing until every door or gate at that landing and all other landings is closed and effectively locked.

Persons intending to make use of a lift therefore, expect that when a landing door or gate is fully open the lift car or platform will be stationary with its floor approximately at the level at the level of the landing sill.

Persons engaged in maintaining, repairing and examining lifts may require to open a landing door whilst the lift car or platform is not at that landing, e.g. to gain access to the lift pit or to the roof of the car. At such times it is essential that persons other than those working on the lift are prevented from making use of such a landing entrance on the assumption that the lift is in normal use and the car or platform is available at that landing.

Whenever a landing door or gate is unlocked or opened with car or platform not stationary or at level of that landing, there is a distinct possibility that people at the landing will be at risk.

Risks

These are:

- persons falling down the hoistway from the landing;
- persons gaining access to the car or platform when it is not at the level of the landing or gaining access to parts of the car or platform which are not normally accessible;
- persons coming into contact with moving parts of the lift.

These risks may endanger other persons in addition to adult workers who are mentally and physically mature and agile. In some instances, children, aged persons or blind persons may be at risk, e.g. In high-rise blocks of flats, department stores or in premises used by the public.

Safe System of Work

Prior to the work commencing, the lift shall be taken out of normal use for the whole period necessary for repair, maintenance, examination to be effected and warning notices shall be displayed at all landings to indicate clearly to intending users that the lift is not available for use.

Unlocking or opening of a landing door or gate when the car or platform is not at its normal position relative to that landing should be done only when absolutely necessary and only then by a competent person. Any special device employed to effect the unlocking shall be removed when unlocking has been effected and should be retained in the possession of the competent person.

In such circumstances, a door or gate should not be allowed to remain open any longer than is absolutely necessary, e.g. to allow an operative to enter into the hoistway. A door or gate should not be left open merely for the convenience of persons working within the hoistway. In this context, it is important to ensure that adequate lighting is provided within the hoistway so that use need not be made of the illumination at a landing. The well-being of any person working at a landing or within a hoistway should be checked regularly.

Some discretion may be applied in the case of the lowest landing of a lift, where landing doors or gates are often allowed to remain open whilst an operative is situated in the pit, i.e beneath the car or platform.

Movement of car or platform whilst landing doors or gates are open increases the hazards to persons at the landings, and such movement of the car or platform should only be undertaken when no alternative exists.

If it is decided that a landing door or gate is to be left unlocked or open whilst a car or platform is not at its normal position relative to that landing then provision shall be made to protect persons from the risks described earlier.

Barriers

Effective protection may be provided by the erection of a suitable fixed barrier at the landing entrance.

A suitable barrier will have handrails, at a minimum height of 950 mm, where any gap between the top rail and any intermediate rail does not exceed 470 mm, with suitable and sufficient toe boards (eg a toe board of a minimum 100 mm height would be acceptable) positioned at the landing entrance threshold may be adequate when the car or platform is stationary. A 950mm high mesh or solid enclosure, set an appropriate distance away from the landing threshold may be more appropriate, especially if any movement of the car or platform is contemplated.

Built-in arrangements for locating and fixing barriers at landing entrances are not normally provided at lift installations, and aesthetic considerations may cause difficulties when special provisions for fixing are requested. However, at least one design of barrier has been produced which can be fixed quite rigidly at the landing entrances of lifts with sliding doors or gates without any structural alterations being necessary. This particular barrier consists of a rigid plastic two-sided hinged frame and is light enough to be carried easily by one person. See Fig 1

Fig 1 Courtesy of PEW Electrical Distributors Ltd

Do not leave an unattended barrier with the doors open. This will be an attraction to vandals or skylarking. Close the doors instead.

The posting of an operative instead of using fixed barriers at unprotected landing entrances in order to prevent other persons from entering an area of danger should not be allowed. In some situations, it may be preferable to consider providing an unfixed barrier in addition to a sentry.

Availability of Barriers

It is recommended that building owners or occupiers should provide suitable barriers and keep them available on site for use when required. They may need to be tailored to the particular lift installation, and such barriers would naturally form an essential ingredient of an agreed safe system of work. In many cases, it is not practical for lift operatives to carry a set of barriers; there are many sizes and design of barrier available and carrying a set of each is not reasonable. Goods lifts, vehicle lifts etc will require large barriers. Many lift operatives operate on walking routes, vehicles being impractical in many urban situations.

Safety of Operatives Working at Lift Landings

It may sometimes be necessary for operatives to work directly at landing entrances whilst the door or gate is open, e.g. when repairing, maintaining, examining door or gate locks. The safety precautions to be taken for themselves and for others in such instances should not be diluted because such persons are considered to be sufficiently experienced at their work so as to be capable of avoiding hazards.

Lifts Under Construction

Most of the problems arising from temporary protection of landing entrances of completed lifts mentioned earlier in this information sheet do not arise when lifts are being constructed.

Protection for landing entrance openings is normally only needed to prevent persons or objects falling through the opening, and the type of protection provided may be identical to that required elsewhere on construction sites, e.g. at edges of scaffold platforms.

The booklet Lift & Escalator Site Safety Handbook published by LEIA, describes and depicts suitable landing entrance protection for lifts under construction.

Developed and updated by LEIA from the HSE Guidance Note PM26 Safety at Lift Landings

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

References:

Lift & Escalator Site Safety Handbook; LEIA 33-34 Devonshire Street LONDON W1G 6PY
Enquiries@leia.co.uk

Work at Height Regulations 2005;
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made

PM26 Safety at Lift Landings Guidance Note; HSE; no longer published
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidanceindex.htm