

Platform Lifts (vertical lifting platforms or lifts for people with impaired mobility). Risk of falls from height to employees/workers and members of the public.

Health and Safety Executive - Safety alert

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Department Name:	Operational Strategy Division - Public Services
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Target Audience:	Platform lift maintenance companies. Owners and operators of platform lifts in a range of sectors (e.g. health and social care, NHS Trusts, public buildings, schools etc)
Key Issues:	<p>Potential danger from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inadequate maintenance of door components; • inappropriate adjustment of door locks; • interference with zone bypass switches at doors; • unauthorised access to lift well (shaft) when the lifting platform (lift car) is at a different level <p>Action required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carry out appropriate levels of maintenance; and • regular safety checks

Introduction:

This Safety Notice is aimed at:

- companies providing maintenance of platform lifts (vertical lifting platforms) and
- owners/operators of such platform lifts used by people with impaired mobility, installed at their premises.

Information is provided for maintenance companies on:

- the risks from tampering with safety critical components (safety devices)

and

- inappropriate or poor maintenance of such components/safety devices.

Safety devices are designed to prevent doors from opening unless the platform lift is at a landing.

Tampering with safety devices may allow the doors to open when the platform/lift car is not at the landing. This could result in a significant risk to the users of falling from height or being crushed.

Background:

Platform lifts (vertical lifting platforms), like traditional passenger lifts, provide access between floors. Platform lifts are hydraulically, or electrically powered. Usually, they operate over two to three floors. They typically rely on hold to run operation and operate at slower speeds than conventional passenger lifts.

HSE is aware of a number of incidents involving **tampering** with safety devices or **inappropriate maintenance** of door switches or unlocking zone bypass switches during maintenance. Combined with deterioration of the doors and their hinges, landing doors have opened when the platform/lift car is not at that landing. This resulted in people potentially accessing the lift well when the lifting platform was not at the same floor level/landing. This has resulted in members of the public or workers falling down the open lift well or becoming trapped beneath a descending platform.

Three incidents occurred on early model **Nami-lift 400 platform lifts** in the serial number range from 2433 (installed in September 1999) to 4225 (installed in December 2006). These lifts incorporate Bowden cables to control the door locks, which are more susceptible to incorrect adjustment.

HSE has identified a number of issues as a result of wear or inappropriate maintenance:

- Bent door lock switch contacts - The contacts on door lock switches have been bent to increase the switch contact force; however, this can prematurely signal to the control system that the door is locked, allowing operation of the lift platform when the locking pin is only partially engaged with the latch plate.
- Shortened door lock pins which do not provide adequate engagement with the door lock plate, allowing the door to be opened
- Incorrect adjustment of Bowden cables
- Missing screws securing door locks and latch plates
- Poor adjustment of unlocking zone bypass mechanisms, meaning that the switch remains permanently activated, allowing the platform to travel between floors with the landing doors

open.

- Damage to doors and door frames resulting in poor door alignment

Actions required:

1. Lift maintenance companies should ensure maintenance activities are undertaken by competent personnel; in line with the manufacturer's instructions and/or guidance; and in accordance with a safe system of work. Maintenance of the safety elements of the lift **must not affect** its safe operation. Modifications intended to keep a lift operating but which may result in unsafe operation **must not be carried out** under any circumstances.
2. Owners and operators of vertical lifting platforms should:
 - review maintenance and inspection procedures to ensure that these tasks are carried out by persons competent to do so
 - introduce simple tests into daily checks for the lifts to confirm that:
 - Landing doors cannot be opened when the platform is not at the same level and;
 - The platform cannot travel without the doors closed and lockedThe checks should be carried out by a person who is competent to do so.

Relevant legal documents:


- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

References:

British Standards

- BS EN 81-1:1998 +A3 2009 Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts - Part 1: Electric lifts
- BS EN 81-2:1998 +A3 2009 Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts - Part 1: Hydraulic lifts
- BS EN 81-41:2010 Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts - Special lifts for the transport of persons and goods Part 41: Vertical lifting platforms intended for use by persons with impaired mobility

HSE Publications

- [L113 Safe use of lifting equipment Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved Code of Practice and guidance](#)^[1]
- [INDG 339 Thorough examination and testing of lifts - Simple guidance for lift owners](#) ^[2]

Further information:

For further enquiries about the design or safety devices associated with elevating lifting platforms, please contact:

- <http://www.leia.co.uk/>  [3]
- Tel - 020 7935 3013

General note:

Please share this information with a colleague who may have this product/ equipment or operate this type of system/process.

Link URLs in this page

1. L113 Safe use of lifting equipment Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved Code of Practice and guidance
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l113.htm>
2. INDG 339 Thorough examination and testing of lifts - Simple guidance for lift owners
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg339.pdf>
3. <http://www.leia.co.uk/>

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