



Are You Aware? No.79 rev0

Subject: Improvement of existing lifts for use by the fire services

Background

We have heard calls for existing lifts to be modernised to be “fire-fighting lifts”. Over the years, a number of different types of lifts have been provided for use by the fire services. All parties need to be clear about these different types to avoid confusion.

The first publication of BS EN 81-72 in 2003 defined requirements for *firefighters lifts*. Before this since 1986, BS 5588-5 defined a *fire-fighting lift* along with suitable building design measures to safeguard the fire-fighting lift. Prior to BS 5588-5, lifts such as *firemen’s lifts* as described in BS 2655-1:1970 and then BS 5655-1:1979 provided rudimentary firemen’s control features without many of the building design measures now considered essential for the protection of a firefighters lift.

BS 8899 recommendations for improving existing lifts to be used by the fire services

BS 8899: 2016; *Improvement of fire-fighting and evacuation provisions in existing lifts – Code of practice* makes recommendations for the improvement of fire-fighting provisions in existing lifts. It is a fundamental assumption of BS 8899 that the elements of the building design necessary for the fire protection and safety of the lift, including secondary power supplies, are provided as part of the building design – see Introduction of BS 8899, BS 9999 and BS 9991 for these.

Where complete modernisation to the requirements of BS EN 81-72:2015 is not reasonably practicable, BS 8899 provides measures which should be applied.

BS 8899 makes clear that for the modernisation of a lift for use by the fire services:

- To be called a *firefighters lift*, the lift would have to fully conform to BS EN 81-72. In this case the firefighters pictogram of BS EN 81-72 must be fitted.
- To be called a *fire-fighting lift*, the modernised lift would have to fully conform to BS 5588-5. However, the last version, BS 5588-5:2004 referenced BS EN 81-72:2003. For this reason, BS 8899 recommends that such lifts are modernised towards BS EN 81-72:2015. The firefighters pictogram of BS EN 81-72 must not be used unless the lift conforms to BS EN 81-72. If not, the label as Figure 1 in BS 8899:2016 should be used.
- Anything else is a “*modernized lift for fire service use*” as defined in BS 8899. The firefighters pictogram must not be used – fix label as Figure 1 in BS 8899:2016.

When receiving a request from a building owner/ responsible person to improve a lift provided for use by the fire services, we strongly recommend that the lift company should clarify the following with the building owner/ responsible person:

- the current lift specification (see BS 8899:2016, Annex B which helps with the different types) and the intended lift specification (noting the above);
- that the building design will provide at least the level of protection and features necessary to protect the lift specified, as described in the relevant standards for the building design.