

Lift & Escalator Owner News

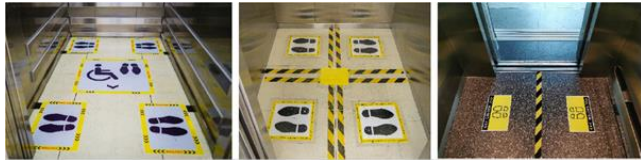
Subject: COVID-19: Guidance for lift, escalator & moving walk owners

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, lifts, escalators and moving walks, homelifts and stairlifts (“equipment”) are in many cases essential to building occupants and users. See our [guidance on what is essential maintenance work](#) and on having equipment thoroughly examined and maintained: [HSE guidance on thorough examination and maintenance](#).

This Owner News includes:

- Guidance for owners in putting measures in place to use lifts, lifting platforms and stairlifts, escalators and moving walks during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Guidance on recommissioning equipment which has been taken out of service.

Use of lifts, lifting platforms and stairlifts

	User precautions	Owner control measures
Lift car and landing buttons and lift car handrails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct contact if possible (e.g. use an object to press the button) or wear gloves. • Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards or use hand sanitiser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clean push buttons, handrails, doors and other surfaces regularly. Note: avoid excessive use of fluids as this might damage the lifts equipment. • consider use of more easily cleanable covers, new buttons using hygienic materials, or surface coatings • consider non-contact registering of calls such as mobile phone apps, foot switches, or use of “bus stop” control of lifts
Lift lobbies	Follow social/ physical distancing guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure lifts are available when needed by disabled persons
Lift cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not enter a lift car if this results in being over the maximum allowed by the owner’s control measures • Use face coverings or face masks according to Government guidance and owners assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent queues forming and ensure social/ physical distancing in lobbies • control number of people travelling in lift cars – where possible restrict to one person • reduce the demand for lifts including using stairs where possible, staggered start times <p>See also 3.2 of Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) for Offices</p> 
Lift cars – quiet or empty buildings	Avoid using lifts if there are few people in the building	Regular checks of operation of the lift voice alarm system; if not working (or no system), put alternative measures in place to check if someone is trapped in the lift car or take the lift out of service.
Homelifts and stairlifts in domestic premises	Avoid direct contact if possible or wear gloves. Wash hands thoroughly afterwards	Clean push buttons/controls, handrails, armrests and other surfaces regularly. Note: do not use excessive fluids when cleaning.

Use of escalators and moving walks

	User precautions	Owner control measures
Escalators and moving walks handrails	Use gloves when using the handrails if possible. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • handrails should be cleaned regularly • consider fitting UV-C units to inside of trusses and fitting signs advising users. Units fitted externally introduce serious risks to users from trapping/drawing-in of fingers/hands between a unit and handrail, and from UV-C radiation. Maintenance should be able to be carried out without risk from UV-C radiation. Power to any UV-C unit should be removed when the escalator is isolated and when the handrail is not moving to avoid local degradation of the handrail material.
Escalators and moving walks	Follow social/ physical distancing guidance – 5 free steps is a 2m gap, do not pass others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible parts should be cleaned regularly • measures to control demand – especially for busy units • markings and signage to direct users

Further guidance

- **Lift door dwell times should not be reduced unless carefully assessed**

Some owners might consider reducing their lift door dwell time (the length of time for which doors stay open to allow passengers to board). Owners should be aware that lifts installed according to BS EN 81-70 “*Accessibility to lifts for persons including persons with disability*” have an adjustable door dwell with minimum 2 s; and that BS EN 81-70 notes that at least 6 s is needed for persons with reduced mobility. Owners are advised to consider carefully before reducing a door dwell time as this might reduce the level of safety especially for users with reduced mobility and some disabled users.

- **Lift door passenger protection devices should not be disabled or disconnected**

These devices, sometimes called “door edges” or “light curtains”, are fitted to lift doors to re-open them if someone passes between the closing doors. Please see an earlier note we did for more guidance: [Lift door passenger protection devices](#).

Some owners might consider disabling the door edge systems but this should not be done as it would reduce the level of safety to passengers entering/egressing the lift car. Disabling these devices would not be in conformity with BS EN 81-20, the safety standard for new lifts, which only allows such devices to be disabled “*to counteract persistent obstructions when closing the door, the protective device may be deactivated after a predetermined time*” and subject to further safeguards. Disabling a passenger safety device would not be supported by Health and Safety Regulations and might expose the owner to claims from users struck by closing doors.

- We understand that control buttons have been damaged by use of parts of the body other than fingers e.g. elbows. Whilst understandable, such usage is clearly outside that for which the equipment has been designed.

Mythbusters

- Small amounts of hand sanitizer, although mostly alcohol, should not significantly raise the fire load within a lift car.
- Lift control systems, including destination control systems (DCS), cannot control or limit the number of people entering a lift car – this is best done by signage and markings. Control systems should be carefully assessed before changing any parameters.
- Lift load weighing systems should not be recalibrated as these are often used by the drive and control system – change threshold levels if needed after careful assessment.

Reduced car loading during COVID-19 should not over-ride planning for the use of lifts in an evacuation to evacuate disabled people or other emergency situations.

Guidance for owners on recommissioning equipment after a shutdown

- Put in place a basic level of maintenance (“caretaker maintenance”) for equipment which has been removed from service or is not being used regularly.
- Ensure that lifting equipment is not overdue for Thorough Examination. See our guidance on [HSE guidance on thorough examination and maintenance](#).
- Ask your maintenance provider to check the condition of your equipment and, if satisfactory, to return it to normal service.
- Batteries and standby power supplies, variable frequency drive systems and other parts might have degraded during a prolonged period of shutdown (and especially if the equipment was not taken out of service by of your maintenance provider). Any such parts should be replaced.
- Equipment should be cleaned and a cleaning regime put in place.

Note: such recommissioning and repair work would be outside the scope of standard maintenance agreements. Any work should be done by or with the agreement of the maintenance provider.