



LEIA Safety Information Sheet

Removing Lifts from Service

Prepared by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee

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SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET

REMOVING LIFTS FROM SERVICE

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

The question is often asked “Who can switch off a lift?” The simple answer being anyone who has access to the main isolator, but the underlying question is does the employee of a lift maintenance contractor have the authority to remove a lift from service and deprive the lift owner of the use of a lift that may be vital to the operation of his business?

As this question is so often asked that the LEIA safety committee have produced the following guidance to those faced with what can be a difficult decision particularly when dealing with a customer whose priority may not be safety.

Retail environments have, anecdotally, been a particular problem.

Comparisons are often made with cars and motor vehicles which the safety committee do not feel are good comparisons.

We pose the following situation and set out a series of steps to be considered.

An employee of a lift company during maintenance, sales surveying or similar activity identifies a lift which is clearly unsafe and is a serious and imminent danger to lift users and/or other people in the building.

1. Wherever possible the employee should consult with their employer (their immediate supervisor or manager) and inform them of the problem.
2. The employer may wish to consider sending another person to assist.
3. As a result of 1 and 2 above it may be that repairs are carried out immediately and the lift remains safe to stay in service.
4. If immediate repair is not possible the lift should be made safe and switched off at the main isolator. The isolator should be secured in some way to ensure the electrical supply is not inadvertently restored. See Note 1 below.
5. A time/date stamped photograph of the secured isolator should be taken, alongside the lift log card on which the action taken has been recorded.
6. The worksheet should be completed, and it should record – the nature of the problem, the hazard this creates and the fact the lift isolator has been switched off and secured. Every effort should also be made to explain to the duty holder (i.e., the customer or lift owner) the reasons behind the action and why it would be unsafe to reinstate the equipment.

Some customers will of course be very unhappy with this course of action, others may threaten commercial sanctions or threaten with the law, and others may return the lift to service after we leave.

Ultimately the duty holder (i.e., the customer or lift owner) is responsible for the safe operation of the equipment – we can only try to persuade them to act in a safe and responsible manner.

LEIA members might reflect that if threatened with the law would they prefer to defend that their action in removing the lift from service was reasonable in the circumstances, or following an accident defend their action in leaving the lift in service which clearly posed a serious risk of harm.

The Safety & Environmental Committee do not feel a list can be provided of issues likely to cause risk of serious harm and where a lift must be switched off if no immediate repair is possible. Here are two examples but there are many others.

- A failed landing door lock which does not keep a door locked once the car moves away.
- A lift which continues to run if a landing door is open

NOTE 1

If the method of securing the isolator is such that the duty holder may if they wish remove it, then any concerns about depriving the duty holder of their lift are allayed.

Two methods are suggested:

1. The isolator is secured in the off position using a cable tie (shown below).
2. The isolator is secured with a padlock and the key/combination of the lock is provided to the duty holder (not shown).

Some companies may wish to go further and provide a document stating the reasons for the isolation, why it would be unsafe to reinstate the equipment and the implications of removing the isolation.

The document should make clear the duty holder takes full responsibility for continued use of the equipment and should preferably be signed by both parties.



Isolator shown secured by cable tie