



Expert commentary

BS 7255:2023 — *Safe working on lifts – Code of practice*

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1 Overview

BS 7255:2023 is a code of practice which gives recommendations for owners and workers for safe working practices on lifts. BS 7255:2023 is the fourth edition of this standard. It technically revises, cancels and replaces the third edition – BS 7255:2012. BS 7255 recognises that the safety of people working on a lift depends both on the lift equipment (under the responsibility of the lift owner), and aspects under the control of the worker supported by their organisation. This standard therefore includes recommendations for both lift owners and workers supported by their organisation.

Compared with the last two editions, which had separate chapters for the safety management responsibilities of owners and for persons working on lifts, BS 7255:2023 has recommendations for both owners and workers within each sub-clause thereby reducing duplication of text and aiding readability of the standard. Many of the recommendations are in clause 5 “Safety responsibilities of owners and persons working on lifts”. Chapter 4 has been repurposed for “Core principles supporting safe working on lifts”.

There are very many lifts installed in the UK with significant numbers installed to standards going back 50 years or more. A lift installed to an earlier standard, if not improved during its life, is unlikely to have important safety features introduced by later standards; hence it would be to a lower level of safety than a recently installed lift. The gap between the level of safety when installed and the current state of the art being typically greater for older lifts to earlier standards. The improvement of the safety provisions of lifts is an important part of the recommendations for lift owners.

As noted above, the standard has been restructured compared with the previous edition yet much of the technical content is retained with revision where needed to reflect developments in the state of the art, experience gained since the previous edition, and to improve the text. Elsewhere significant new content has been introduced.

Users are strongly encouraged to read the whole of the standard for a thorough understanding of the context and various linkages between different recommendations.

1.1 Reasons for change

A key reason for the revision of BS 7255 was to accommodate changes in the base standard for the design of new lifts with the publication of BS EN 81-20:2014 *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Lifts for the transport of persons and goods - Passenger and goods passenger lifts* (the later BS EN 81-20:2020 has identical technical requirements). In particular, the revision was to take account of the following new requirements introduced by BS EN 81-20 which have implications for procedures for safe working on lifts installed to or improved to these standards:

- a pit inspection control station was described for the first time;
- the return to normal operation from the pit inspection control station to be from an electrical reset device outside the well;
- requirements for inspection control stations introduced a common run button – something advocated in previous editions of BS 7255.

The publication in 2019 of BS EN 81-80 *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Existing lifts - Rules for the improvement of safety of existing passenger and goods passenger lifts* provided guidance on improving the level of safety of an existing lift towards the level of a new lift in BS EN 81-20. Many of the recommended improvements described in the previous revision now reference relevant clauses in BS EN 81-80.

Changes to relevant legislation and changes in published codes of practice have been relatively light. It should be noted that many of the relevant regulations have now been established as retained EU law (REUL).

Elsewhere, discussions between stakeholders including those represented on MHE/4, the BSI lifts, hoists and escalators committee responsible for BS 7255, highlighted that a revision of BS 7255 could usefully include further guidance on aspects such as:

- the understanding of the application of thorough examination in different contexts;
- references to industry guidance detailing qualifications in support of training and competence;
- training of people undertaking the release of passengers trapped (shut-in) a lift including where the release is by persons within the lift owners' organisation;
- removal of an unsafe lift from service;
- returning a lift to service especially after changes have been made to it;
- the well-being of a person working with others;
- the importance of having up to date details for the lift and steps that might be required where these are not present;

Experience with the previous edition suggested that its structure might be improved to aid its readability.