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Safe working on lifts – Code of practice

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Summary of pages

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 30 November 2023. It was prepared by Technical Committee MHE/4, *Lifts, hoists and escalators*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

BSI Committee MHE/4 takes collective responsibility for the preparation of this British Standard. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the personal contribution of Dr Gina Barney to this British Standard and to the work of MHE/4 from 1992 to 2023.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 7255:2012, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

This is a full revision of the document, and introduces the following principal changes:

- a) restructuring of the main clauses;
- b) updates to accommodate new legislation;
- c) updates to accommodate new and revised standards published since 2012;
- d) new recommendations for an owner's safety survey and documentation;
- e) new recommendations on reporting and exchange of information;
- f) replacement of specific qualifications with references to industry guidance;
- g) new procedures for removing an unsafe lift from service;
- h) new checks and tests on changes before returning a lift to service;
- i) new recommendations for the wellbeing of a person working with others;
- j) revision of recommendations for electrical working;
- k) new and revised procedures for safe working on the car top and in the pit;
- l) new procedures for safe working in machinery spaces; and
- m) revised recommendations for major repair and dismantling.

Copyright is claimed in the following elements of the document:

- definitions [3.2](#), [3.11](#), [3.13](#), [3.19](#), [3.26](#) and [3.27](#);
- [Table A.1](#); and
- [Figure B.1](#).

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As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of recommendations and guidance. It is not to be quoted as if it were a specification. Users are expected to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Users may substitute any of the recommendations in this British Standard with practices of equivalent or better outcome. Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions in this document are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

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Introduction

In drafting this British Standard, it has been assumed (unless otherwise stated) that the lifts on which work is being undertaken have been placed on the market and into service in accordance with one of the following standards: [BS EN 81-1](#), [BS EN 81-2](#) or [BS EN 81-20](#).

At the time of publication, there have been two revisions of [BS EN 81-20](#), in 2014 and 2020, both of which are referenced in this document. For clarity, the European Foreword of [BS EN 81-20:2020](#) included the following on its relationship with BS EN 81-20:2014: “No technical changes have been made during this revision”. Clause numbers and their requirements were unchanged in the 2020 revision from the 2014 revision.

For lifts that have been placed on the market and into service in accordance with earlier standards, this British Standard which references [BS EN 81-80](#) can assist:

- a) an owner to identify improvements to be made to their lift; and
- b) persons working on lifts to recommend improvements and develop safe working procedures for a particular lift.

Since the introduction of the Lifts Regulations 1997 [1] from 1 July 1999, many lift designs have not followed the relevant standards for lifts, e.g. [BS EN 81-1](#), [BS EN 81-2](#) or [BS EN 81-20](#), and have instead been approved under type examination (e.g. model lift), unit verification or design examination. This has allowed the introduction of alternative equipment and solutions than those described in the main standards for lifts, thereby also introducing different procedures for carrying out some work tasks on lifts. In many places in this British Standard, there are references to the owner’s documentation for the details of how certain tasks on a lift are to be completed safely. Hence it is essential that the owner retains the information provided with the new lift and makes it available to any persons working on the lift.

The procedures described in this British Standard are generic, and in some cases they might not align with the owner’s documentation provided with a new lift installation (see [4.4](#)) by the installer of the lift. In such cases the procedures can be used, in conjunction with the owner’s documentation, as the basis for the development of bespoke safe working procedures for the particular lift.

It has also been assumed in drafting this British Standard that:

- 1) any operation of the lift in the event of fire, recall operation, operation as an evacuation lift, or operation to allow for use by firefighters, has been checked; and
- 2) it has been confirmed that these operations do not override maintenance operations and electrical safety devices.

Inspection and maintenance of lifts with operation in the event of fire, such as lifts for use by firefighters and evacuation lifts, is covered in [BS 8899](#).

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for safe working practices (supported by training) to be undertaken by:

- a) owners of permanently installed lifts serving defined landing levels;
- b) persons having effective control of the premises where such lifts are installed; and
- c) persons responsible for, and involved in, the design, installation, commissioning, testing, maintenance, thorough examination, inspection, repair and dismantling of such lifts.

This British Standard gives recommendations for the safety of persons when gaining access to and from the work area on a lift installation and while working there. The recommendations also relate to the safety of others present in the vicinity, whether they are working or not, who could be endangered by the actions of those working on lifts.

This British Standard does not give recommendations for installation methods and procedures, nor does it give recommendations for procedures to be carried out following an accident or serious incident.

This British Standard does not cover the following types of lifting devices:

- 1) lifts that are not permanently installed;
- 2) stair lifts;
- 3) lifting platforms;

NOTE 1 Recommendations for safe working on lifting platforms are given in [BS 9102](#).

- 4) vertical lifting appliances with an enclosed carrier (“slow speed lifts”);

NOTE 2 This refers to slow speed lifts designed under the *Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008* [2].

- 5) lifts moving along guide rails inclined more than 15° to the vertical; and
- 6) other lifting appliances such as paternosters, mine lifts, access lifts to workplaces, theatrical lifts, appliances with automatic caging, skips, lifts and hoists for construction sites, ships’ hoists, platforms for exploration or drilling at sea, construction and maintenance appliances.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes provisions, or limits the scope, of this document¹⁾. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Standards publications

BS 5655-6:2011, *Lifts and service lifts – Part 6: Code of practice for the selection, installations and location of new lifts*

BS 7375, *Distribution of electricity on construction and demolition sites – Code of practice*

BS 7671, *Requirements for electrical installations – IET Wiring Regulations*²⁾

¹⁾ Documents that are referred to solely in an informative manner are listed in the Bibliography.

²⁾ This document also gives an informative reference to [BS 7671:2018+A2:2022](#).