

A SIMPLE GUIDE ON THOROUGH EXAMINATIONS OF LIFTING EQUIPMENT (LOLER)



◆ INTRODUCTION TO LOLER REGULATION

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) require periodic *thorough examinations* of lifting equipment by a *competent person* at regular intervals. The main purpose of LOLER is to ensure the safe provision and use of lifting equipment. It applies to both passenger and goods lifts.

◆ WHO IS A DUTY-HOLDER?

A *duty-holder* under LOLER is a *lift owner, facilities manager, or supervisor*. If you are one of those, you are responsible for the safe operation of the lift. Basically, this means that you have a legal responsibility to ensure that the lift is thoroughly examined by a *competent person* at regular intervals and that it is safe to use.

◆ WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE DUTY-HOLDER?

The *duty-holder* is legally responsible for:

- maintaining the lift so that it is safe to use;
- selecting and instructing the *competent person*;
- ensuring that the lift is examined at statutory intervals (generally every 6 months);
- informing the *competent person* of any changes in the lift operating conditions;
- acting promptly to remedy any defects;
- making documentation available to the *competent person*;
- ensuring that all documentation complies with LOLER;
- keeping records of all reports.

◆ WHO IS A COMPETENT PERSON?

A *competent person* is somebody who has sufficient *technical* and *practical knowledge* of lifting equipment, who is able to detect defects or weaknesses and can assess how significant those are for the safety and continued use of the lifting equipment. The Health and Safety

Executive (HSE) states that the *competent person* should be sufficiently *impartial* and *independent* in order to make an objective assessment.

According to the law, it is not advisable to use the same person to perform routine maintenance and also carry out *thorough examinations*, as they would then essentially be assessing their own work (just like evaluating one's own exam paper)! That is why it is important that the *thorough examination* is carried out by a third party who is *impartial* and *independent*.

◆ IS LIFT MAINTENANCE THE SAME AS A THOROUGH EXAMINATION?

NO - Maintenance should not be confused with a *thorough examination*. Maintenance involves replacing worn or damaged parts, topping up fluid levels and making routine adjustments in order to ensure that risks are avoided. A *thorough examination*, although it may overlap with certain aspects of maintenance work, acts as a check that maintenance is being carried out properly and determines if the lift is safe to use.

◆ SO WHAT IS A THOROUGH EXAMINATION?

It is a systematic and detailed examination of the lift by a *competent person* in order to identify defects which are or may become dangerous. The *competent person* reports the findings of the examination to the *duty-holder*. If a defect is serious and significant, the *competent person* is legally required to send a copy of the report to the enforcing authority.

◆ HOW OFTEN MUST THE LIFT BE INSPECTED UNDER LOLER?

A lift needs to be inspected at regular intervals (**generally every 6 months**), after significant changes have been made or following exceptional circumstances (e.g. damage, failure or a major change in the operating conditions of the lift).

◆ WHAT WOULD THE REPORT INCLUDE?

A *thorough examination* should include:

- the date of the last inspection and the date when the next inspection is due by;
- the safe working load of the lift;
- the reason for the *thorough examination* (i.e. statutory interval, following installation, according to another examination scheme, etc.);
- any defect which is or may become dangerous;
- details of repair, renewal or alteration required to remedy the defect and the date by which this should be done;
- details of the tests carried out;
- details of the person creating the report and the person validating it.

The *duty-holder* should make sure that all of the above information is contained in the report before accepting it.

◆ HOW SHOULD RECORDS BE KEPT?

Records should be kept for **2 years** after they are issued. It is advisable to keep records in hardcopy and softcopy format. They should be made available for the consideration of the health and safety inspector as and when required.