

# Private lifts

Information for residents

May 2016



## Information and guidance on private lifts

If you buy and install a lift in your home yourself or if you have one provided under a Disabled Facilities Grant, you will own the lift and it will be your responsibility to service and maintain it.

The Disabled Facilities Grant usually only funds the initial installation of the lift and will not cover ongoing servicing and maintenance costs.

This leaflet contains important information that you need to consider if you're having a private lift installed in your home.

### Service and maintain your lift

We recommend that a lift of any type should have at least an annual service. This will help to keep it in good working order and may also reduce the need to pay for an expensive major repair in future.

Lift companies offer different levels of service and many offer servicing and maintenance warranties or agreements. The amount this will cost you will vary depending on the level of cover offered.

You don't have to take a contract out with the company who installed the lift as other companies may be able to service and maintain your lift. However, some companies will only provide a contract on lifts that they supplied and installed.

Whatever company you use to supply and service your lift, make sure they are:

- Registered with the Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA)
- An approved 'Domestic Installer'.

### Top tips for choosing a company to service your lift

1. Get a quote from a couple of different companies, so you can compare. Make sure you get a quote, not an estimate, so you know how much it's going to cost you
2. Ask them if they have an easy payment scheme which would allow you to pay in instalments
3. Make sure you know exactly what you can expect from the company in terms of what is covered in your contract with them and what is extra. For example, do you have to pay extra for parts?
4. Ask questions like how often will the lift be serviced? Do they provide a 24 hour call out service for emergencies and breakdowns? What is their response time to your call?

### What to do if your lift isn't working

You should receive a manufacturer's user guide with your lift. This will include important information about how to use your lift safely and a checklist of what to do if the lift doesn't work.

There could be a number of very simple reasons to explain why your lift isn't working. You may be able to sort out the problem quickly yourself, by going through the manufacturer's guide and checking a few standard things.

- Check that the lift's safe working load is right for you. This is the amount of weight that the lift can carry
- Check that all lift's switches are in the 'on' position and the emergency stop button has not been pushed in. Ask a neighbour or relative to check if you can't see or reach the switches
- Check your fuse box to ensure that all trip switches have been reset (or that no fuses have blown). This could cause your lift to stop working
- Are all other electrical appliances working at your home? If not, it could be a mains supply problem. Contact your electricity supplier
- Make sure your lift is parked on the charging point when not in use, otherwise the battery won't charge
- Is there anything on the track that could damage the lift or prevent it from moving, like debris or toys? Make sure you check before using your lift each time
- See if track needs to be cleaned. Please refer to your manufacturer's guidelines on what to do.

If your lift still doesn't work after you've done these checks, you'll need to contact your servicing company.

## How will you manage if your lift isn't working?

If your lift needs to be repaired, it might not be possible to do this straightaway. Make sure you have a plan for how you're going to manage in your home without a lift. Consider what short term help you may need or alternatives to using the lift.

## Lift warranties

A new lift will be guaranteed for at least one year, under a warranty. Some companies offer an extended warranty. They may want you to take this out when the lift is ordered or before the original warranty runs out. Always make sure you check what you're being offered when you receive quotations.

If you purchase a second hand lift privately (not through a lift company) there may be a current warranty that can be transferred to you, but you'll need to check with the company who provided the original warranty.

## What is a warranty?

- A warranty covers you for a set amount of time, in the event that your lift stops working or needs repair. The repair work will be completed free of charge within the terms of your warranty
- Parts will also be covered and replaced for free if proven to be at fault, but a warranty often won't cover normal wear and tear.

## Things to check about your warranty

- Make sure you know what's included and what will cost extra. Are there extra costs for refitting for example?
- How long are the main rechargeable batteries and motor-gearbox covered for? These can be expensive to replace
- What are the company's response times?
- What are you actually getting if you're offered 24 hour call out cover? Will the company come out during evenings or weekends?
- Does the warranty include replacement batteries for the remote control handset?
- Does the warranty include an annual, routine service?

## Lift maintenance agreements

When your warranty runs out it doesn't mean that you can't get your lift maintained or repaired. This is because most companies also offer "maintenance agreements".

You can pay for a maintenance agreement annually, in the same way you'd pay for a warranty. You can also purchase a block of time – say, five years of cover.

## What is a maintenance agreement?

- A maintenance agreement is a guarantee from a company that your lift will be looked at and repaired by one of their engineers
- They are treated as an extension of your warranty by some companies.

## Things to check about your maintenance agreement

- Check what level of cover is on offer, what this includes and the cost. Cover can range from basic (often just an annual service with all parts coming at an extra cost) to premium cover (which could include all parts, call out fees, fuel, time spent on site and out of hours call outs)
- Whichever level of cover you choose, check what's included as part of the cost and what will be charged as an additional cost.

## Second hand lifts

If you're considering a second hand lift, it's a good idea to:

- Get an independent survey from a reputable lift company to check that the lift is in good working order, that spare parts are easily available and it's "fit for purpose"

- Make sure the lift is suitable for your staircase, that there is sufficient knee room and the lift's working weight limit meets your needs
- Check there is a suitable safe area for you to get on and off the lift or for it to be parked when not in use and that it doesn't block escape routes in cases of fire.

## **Home contents insurance**

We recommend that you let your home contents insurers know that you have a lift in your home, so that it's covered on your policy against fire or accidental damage.