

You and Your Home: A guide to looking after and getting the best from your lift

Maintenance of stairlifts, through the floor lifts and step lifts

Please take the time to read this document as it includes important information that you need to consider before having a lift installed. This leaflet also contains information that you may want to refer to when you have had the lift installed. If you need any help to understand this document, please contact Call Derbyshire on telephone: **01629 533 190**.

If you have a lift installed through a Disabled Facilities Grant, the lift becomes your property and you will be responsible for the on-going maintenance and repair. It is advisable to let your home insurance company know that you have had a lift installed so that it is covered on your policy against fire or accidental damage.

Do I need to consider having my lift serviced and maintained?

All lifts will come with a minimum of one years warranty, provided by the manufacturer, and this will cover any repairs during the first year.

It is recommended that a lift of any type should have at least an annual service. This will help to maintain it in good working order and extend the lifetime use of the lift. Through floor lifts may require a service twice a year.

If you are a District Council or Housing Association tenant, please ask your housing officer about maintenance as some councils/Housing Associations will provide a servicing scheme for lifts in their properties.

Do I have to take out a servicing and maintenance contract from the company who installed the lift?

Most companies offer different levels of service and maintenance contracts and the cost will vary with the level of cover provided and the type of contract you choose.

You do not 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 supplied and installed by them.

Companies that do provide a contract for lifts not installed by them may charge for an initial inspection to establish the age, type and condition of the lift before agreeing to maintain the lift.

What do I need to know before choosing a different company to the one who installed the lift?

We would recommend that you use a company that is a member of Derbyshire Trusted Trader, Which Trusted Trader, Check a Trade or similar organisation. As a member of these organisations, traders commit to providing good services legally, honestly and fairly.

All businesses that apply to join a Trusted Trader schemes are subject to checks by trading standards. Reviews take place regularly to ensure that all members continue to meet the terms and conditions of membership.

What questions do I need to ask when obtaining a quote for a service and maintenance contract?

We would always advise obtaining quotes from more than one company. It is important to find out the following from any company before you sign up with them:

- how often they will service your lift?
- whether it is on a planned schedule or whether you have to request it?
- do they provide a call out system for emergency/ breakdowns? You may want to consider a contract that gives a 24 hour call- out facility
- what is their availability for contacting? Is it office hours only?
- importantly, what is their response time to your call?
- what is covered in the cost of the contract?
- how many call-outs can you have in what period of time?
- are parts included in the price or an extra?
- what other extras do you have to pay for?
- check they have fully trained service engineers on call 24 hours a day

Make sure you know exactly what you can expect from the company in terms of what is covered in your contract with them.

You should always ask for a quotation and not an estimate so that you know the actual cost of the work before you agree to have any work started.

You may also want to ask if they have an easy payment scheme which would allow you to pay by instalments.

Repairs for lifts should be VAT exempt if you are an eligible person. There is a form which you need to complete. You can ask the company for more information about this.

What can I do to maximise the life of my lift and reduce the number of callouts and repairs?

You should have received a manufacturer's user guide with the lift. This will contain important information on how to use your lift or safely and a checklist of what to do if the lift does not work.

There could be a number of simple reasons why your lift isn't working. You may be able to sort out the problem quickly yourself, by going through the manufacturer's guide together with this checklist.

- Using a lift over the weight limit is unsafe and likely to lead to an increase in breakdowns. If your weight has increased since the lift was installed, check that the safe working load of the lift is still appropriate to your needs.
- Has someone touched the lift since you last used it? A visitor or carer may have, switched it off or pushed the emergency stop button in.
- Check that all switches are in the 'on' position and that the emergency stop button has not been pushed in. Ask a neighbour or relative to check if you cannot see or reach the switches.
- Has there been a problem with the electricity supply recently, such as a power cut, or a light bulb failing which may have tripped the switch? Check the fuse box to ensure that all trip switches have been reset (or that no fuses have blown).
- Are all other electrical appliances working at your home? If not, it could be a mains supply problem. Contact your electricity power supplier. You can find their number on your electricity bill or in a phone book.

- Always remember to leave your stair lift on the charging point when not in use, otherwise the battery will not charge. A lot of stair lifts have an alarm if the lift is not properly parked on its charging point.
- Do not ignore the alarm as this may result in the need to purchase a new battery which will be expensive.
- Is there anything on the stair lift track that could damage the lift or prevent it from moving such as debris or toys? Make sure you check before using your lift each time.
- Some stair lifts require the track to be cleaned regularly. Please refer to your manufacturer's guidelines on what to do

If you are still unable to get the lift to work, you will need to contact your servicing company. It is useful to write the phone number of the company or the contractors you are using on a label and stick this onto the lift carriage, ensuring you do not place it somewhere that could affect the lift function.

How will I manage if my lift does not work?

In the event of a breakdown, it might not always be possible for the lift to be repaired straight away. We would always suggest you have worked out a plan for managing should the lift not be working for any reason. You might find it helpful to have a folder to keep this leaflet in and any other information about your lift to ensure that it is easy for both you and your family to find. It is also useful to carry a community alarm pendant or a mobile phone when using the lift should you need to summon assistance. Consider what short term help you may need or alternatives to using the lift until it is repaired or if necessary for a longer period of time.

If you are unable to make your own arrangements or you have any concerns, you can contact your Adult Care worker or contact Call Derbyshire on **01629 533 190**