

Lifts should be suitable for all people to use independently. These design notes outline the minimum standards.

For travel between floors, lifts should be of the enclosed passenger car type. Where changes of level occur within a floor, wheelchair stair lifts or platform lifts may be suitable alternatives to a ramp, in addition to any stairs.

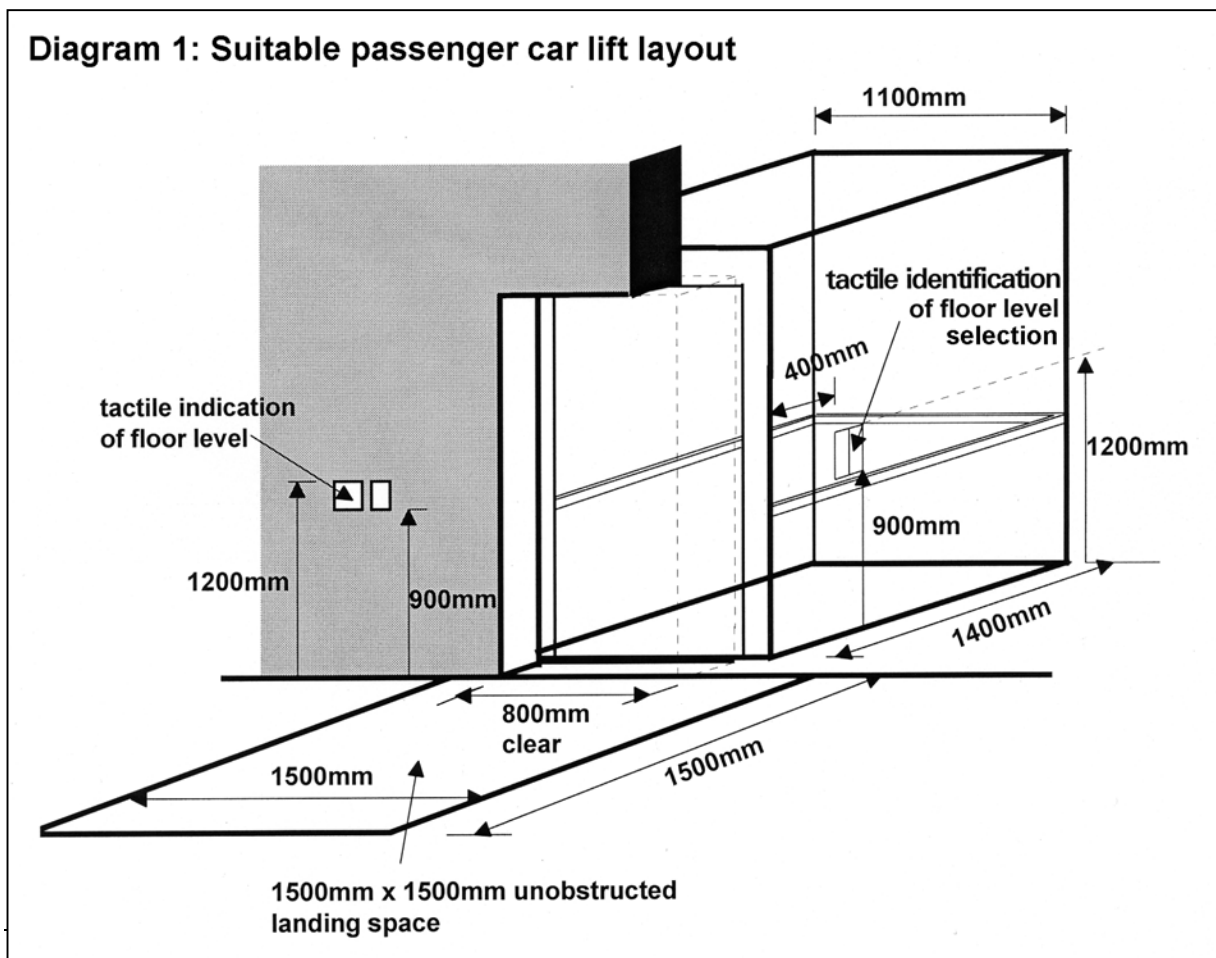
Where a building is being refurbished or upgraded and the installation of a passenger lift and associated lift shaft is not practicable, a platform lift should be considered. The latest generation of platform lifts are capable of carrying around 400Kg up to three storeys in height.

Approaches and doors for passenger lifts and platform lifts

- A clear landing at least 1500mm wide and 1500mm long should be provided in front of the entrance.
- The door when open should not obstruct any escape route past the lift.
- There should be a clear door opening width of at least 800mm.
- Landings and doors should be visually distinguishable from walls.

Controls for passenger lifts and platform lifts

- Landing and car controls should be 900-1200mm above the floor, and in the case of the car at a distance of at least 400mm from the front wall.



- Suitable tactile indication (raised numbers) on the landings to identify the floor, and in the car to identify the floor selected, should be provided.
- Voice and visual announcement of the floor reached should be provided.
- A signalling system that gives 5 seconds notification that the lift is answering a landing call, and a minimum 'dwell time' of 5 seconds before the doors begin to close after they are fully open, should be used. The system may be overridden by a door-reactivating device that relies on photo-eye or infrared methods (but not by a door edge pressure system), provided that the minimum time for a lift door to remain fully open is 3 seconds.
- Controls should be easy to manipulate with concave or flat surfaces and a minimum dimension of 15mm. This is of particular use to people with limited dexterity or poor sight.

Passenger car lifts

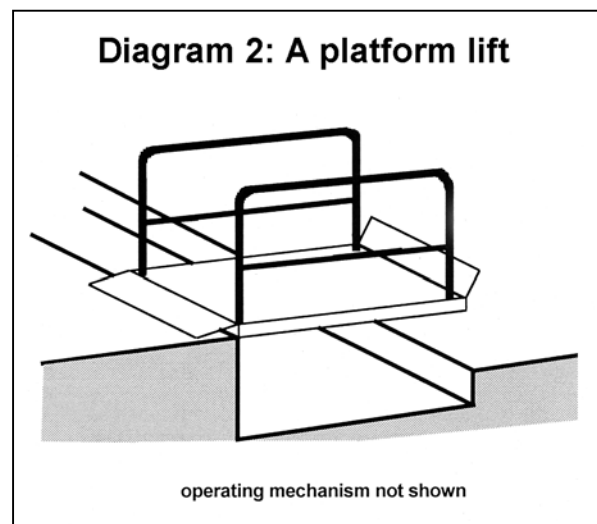
- Where car doors on different floors are not vertically one above another, the lift car size and door width may need to be increased accordingly.
- A visually contrasting handrail should be provided on the rear and side walls between 900mm and 1000mm above the floor.
- The car should stop precisely at floor level.
- Internal surfaces should be light coloured to prevent a claustrophobic effect.
- A mirror should be provided to enable a wheelchair user to see behind the wheelchair unless the car is enlarged so that a wheelchair user can turn around; mirrors should otherwise be avoided as they may lead to confusion.

Platform lifts

These may be suitable where it would be unreasonable to provide a passenger car lift.

There are two types of platform lift: -

- Manual types are only suitable for a person who is familiar with the lift, and are usually self-supporting and have a counterbalancing mechanism.
- Powered types include scissor lifts, those with exposed seats, and fully enclosed lift cars, which can be on a self-supporting framework or be supported by the building.



Platform lifts can also be sited in an external lift shaft attached to the building. Some installations can allow entry from opposite sides at different levels. A liftway enclosure should be provided where vertical travel is greater than 2m. Useful features of a platform lift are that, in general, only a very shallow pit is needed in the floor beneath the lift rather than the deep pit needed for a passenger car lift, and no motor room is required.

Some designs can allow for the lift to be parked at first floor level leaving the room below clear except for guides.

- Platforms should be at least 800mm by 1250mm if unenclosed, or 900mm by 1400mm if enclosed, but 1100mm by 1400mm if any door is at the side of the platform or if it is intended to accommodate an accompanied wheelchair user.
- Platforms should finish level with the floor at the top and bottom and any necessary ramp should permit unaided access.

Stair lifts

These can be installed internally or externally and can be installed on a staircase with straight, spiral or tapered flights and landings.

Controls should prevent unauthorised use.

Chair stair lifts

Chair stair lifts have a seat for a single user. Wheelchair users would need to transfer from their wheelchair. They are not suitable for areas intended to be publicly accessible.

Wheelchair stair lifts

Wheelchair stair lifts have a platform for wheelchair users or for people with pushchairs and the like. There is no need to transfer out of a wheelchair. The platform should be at least 800mm by 1250mm.

Other forms of stair lift

There are other mechanical devices for assisting disabled people to negotiate stairways. They should each be treated on their merits, and each may be suitable in some circumstances.

Fire Safety

- Stair lifts are provided for access only; they are not suitable for use as a means of escape.
- When a stair lift is installed in an escape stairway, it is essential that the stairway width required for means of escape is maintained whilst the stair lift is not in use; regard will need to be paid to the fixed rail and components, the power unit, and the stair lift itself when parked. The minimum required width of a stair should be determined having regard to several factors. Seek further advice from your Building Control surveyor or Fire Authority if in doubt.
- Suitable smoke detection conforming to the relevant British Standard should be provided within a stairway enclosure containing a stair lift because the stair lift itself might pose a fire risk.
- Refuges should be provided for protected stairways (see Design Note No 13 – Means of escape) for details.

This guide is produced by the Access Officers of Brighton & Hove City Council, Eastbourne BC, Hastings BC, Lewes DC, Rother DC and Wealden DC