



Lifting equipment

In an industrial setting, lifting equipment such as, cranes, forklifts, lifts and hoists is easy to identify. Spotting similar equipment in a church, charitable organisation or other business may not be so immediately obvious.

However, many churches do have large, heavy ornate font covers which are raised and lowered by a system of pulleys with counterweights. Similar mechanisms are also used to raise and lower candelabra and sanctuary lamps. Larger premises may have other lifting equipment including chair and passenger lifts, dumb waiters, hoists, cherry pickers and other equipment associated with construction work.

Legal requirements

Generally, if someone is injured you may need to show that you have met your duty of care.

In addition to this, you may have to comply with more specific health and safety law as well. This includes the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations. If you are an employer or have control of lifting equipment you must comply with these. In controlling this equipment, you will only need to comply with the requirements to the extent of your control.

Under these regulations, you will need to make sure that lifting equipment is:

- sufficiently strong, stable and suitable for its intended use
- positioned or installed to prevent people being injured – for example, from being struck by a load
- clearly marked with appropriate safety information, e.g. safe working load limits etc.

Some lifting equipment and accessories may need to be thoroughly examined before they are used for the first time. Thereafter, all lifting equipment may need to be thoroughly examined at specified periods. These examinations must be completed by someone who is competent, having the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to complete the work. Where those completing the examination advise that there is a defect in the equipment which could cause danger, the equipment must not be used until it is put right.

Hazards to look out for

Some of the typical hazards include:

- people or their clothing coming into contact with pulleys and chains
- sharp edges or points and rough surfaces
- damaged parts (e.g. badly worn chains; kinked, twisted or frayed ropes)
- overloading with loads that are too heavy or exceed safe working limits
- slip and trip hazards, or other obstructions in the vicinity of lifting equipment
- poor or no maintenance.*

*Note: this list is not exhaustive

Precautions you can take

Typical precautions include:

- checking all equipment is complete, with all necessary safeguards fitted, and free from obvious defects
- checking that surrounding areas are kept clean and tidy, free from obstructions or slips and trips hazards, and are well lit
- maintaining the equipment properly
- arranging for the required examinations to be completed
- ensuring that anyone who uses the equipment is provided with any necessary information and training where this is needed to ensure their safety.*

*Note: this list is not exhaustive

Making a start

Action	Guidance
1. Identify all the lifting equipment that is used at your premises.	<p>Broadly, lifting equipment includes any powered or non-powered equipment for lifting or lowering loads. It would include any attachments used for anchoring, fixing or supporting loads (such as, chains, eyebolts etc.).</p> <p>Remember, some items may not be immediately obvious particularly if they are no longer used or if their use is infrequent.</p> <p>Any redundant equipment should be decommissioned, and made safe so that it cannot be used until it has been removed. A warning sign or label should be displayed advising that it should not be used and locked to prevent use. Where appropriate, the key should be kept in a safe place where others cannot access it.</p>
2. Check the precautions you have taken are adequate. If they are not, identify any additional ones that are needed and who will be responsible for implementing them.	<p>If you are an employer, you will need to complete formal risk assessments. These should help plan for any lifting work and decide if the precautions you have in place are adequate or if others are needed.</p> <p>The precautions necessary will depend on the types of lifting equipment you have at your premises and your own particular circumstances. These could include those necessary to stop people being injured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moving parts of machinery • trapping in chains and pulleys • sharp edges or points • defective or poorly maintained equipment or attachments • equipment failure causing loads to drop. <p>In many cases, proper inspection, maintenance and use of the equipment will prevent injuries from occurring.</p>

Action	Guidance
<p>3. Ensure that the precautions you have identified are taken and remain effective, including any maintenance and servicing that may be required.</p> <p>Make sure any pre-use checks, inspections and thorough examinations are carried out where necessary.</p> <p>Make a note of any checks or inspections you make.</p>	<p>Preventing danger from the use of lifting equipment relies in large part, on the integrity of the equipment and accessories used.</p> <p>As such, all equipment should be appropriately checked and maintained to make sure it remains safe for use. Some equipment may require simple pre-use and daily checks or periodic inspection. Most equipment will need to be thoroughly examined.</p> <p>A thorough examination is a systematic and detailed examination of the equipment, including any safety-crucial parts. These need to be carried out at specified times depending on the type of equipment. For example, some equipment might need this before they are used for the first time; after assembly and before use at a particular location; or in other circumstances (e.g. if it has been damaged; failed; been out of service for a long time; or where it has been altered).</p> <p>Most equipment will need to be thoroughly examined regularly while it is in service. These should be conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every 6 months – for lifting equipment and accessories used to lift people • every 6 months – for all other lifting accessories • every 12 months – for all other lifting equipment. <p>However, this periodicity can be varied in premises where simple lifting equipment is in use reflecting the level of risk associated with it. Usually, this would be in accordance with a written examination scheme drawn up by a competent person. This could be quite a straightforward document, identifying (amongst other things) the parts of the equipment to be thoroughly examined and the periodicity of this. Where such a ‘scheme’ is prepared, you may need to ensure that it is reviewed by a competent person periodically; during any thorough examination itself; or where the risk associated with the equipment changes (e.g. following any incident).</p> <p>Thorough examination must be carried out by someone who is competent. They must have appropriate practical/theoretical knowledge and experience of the lifting equipment being examined. However, this should not be the same person that carries out routine maintenance of the equipment as they would be responsible for assessing their own maintenance work.</p> <p>They must also provide you with a written report (containing specified information) once they have completed any examination.</p> <p>Where they report a serious defect to you, that equipment must not be used until this has been corrected. You may need to take additional precautions to ensure that the equipment is not used in these circumstances (e.g. locking equipment off and displaying adequate warning signs etc.).</p>

Action	Guidance
<p>4. Make sure people using your lifting equipment are provided with any necessary information and training.</p> <p>Make a note of any information or training that is provided to individuals.</p>	<p>The level of information and training required will vary depending on the type of equipment used and your particular circumstances. If you have completed formal risk assessments, these will help you decide what is necessary.</p> <p>Generally, for many small premises where straightforward lifting equipment is used, simple instruction on how to use the equipment safely and report defects promptly would be sufficient.</p> <p>However, where more sophisticated equipment is used in larger premises, more specialist training may be required.</p>
<p>5. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for the safe use of lifting equipment at your premises.</p> <p>Keep the notes you have made in the steps above.</p>	<p>If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record these as part of it.</p> <p>You should keep the reports of any thorough examinations and other documents (such as, the current record of inspection) either in hard copy form or electronically at your premises.</p>

Want to know more?

Further useful resources are available at www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/loler.htm

Note: if you are in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, then regional variations might apply. In this instance, you should check the guidance provided by the Enforcing Agency for your region. This will be freely available on their website.

Risk advice line

(provided by Ecclesiastical professionals or external specialists)

Phone: **0345 600 7531**
 Email: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

Risk specialists are on hand to advise you on a range of topics, including:

- property protection, security, business continuity planning
- health and safety, food safety, environmental management
- construction safety, fire safety, occupational health, water safety or asbestos.

Available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (excluding public and bank holidays).

For further information speak to your insurance advisor or call us on **0345 60 20 999**

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