

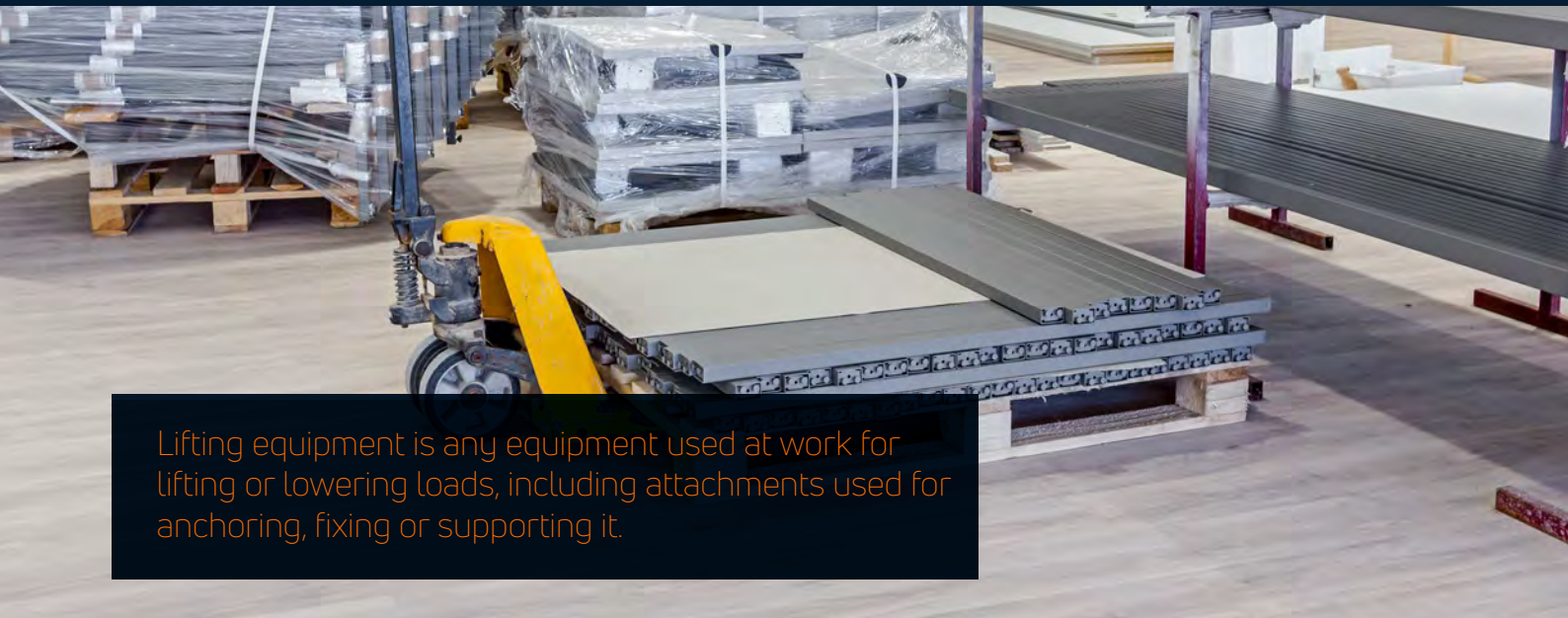
Lifting equipment

This guidance highlights some of the hazards associated with the use of lifting equipment and the steps that can be taken to reduce or mitigate the risk.

RISK ADVICE LINE

Having read this guidance should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our 'Risk Advice Line' on 0345 600 7531 (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, excluding bank holidays) and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist. Alternatively you can email us at risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

For queries about your policy cover or claims please contact your insurance broker.



Lifting equipment is any equipment used at work for lifting or lowering loads, including attachments used for anchoring, fixing or supporting it.

Diverse examples include chair and passenger lifts, dumb waiters, hoists, cherry pickers, forklift trucks, rope and pulley systems and mobile elevating work platforms. Lifting accessories such as chains, slings or eyebolts are also lifting equipment.

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 used for work 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.

You must also make sure that lifting operations are planned, supervised and carried out in a safe manner by people who are competent.

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.

The regulations do not apply if you provide equipment used primarily by members of the public. An example would be a passenger lift in a shopping centre. However, you would still have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to make sure the equipment is safe.

Whilst these regulations are wide in the scope of equipment covered, there are some other exceptions. These include pallet trucks (where the consequence of the load falling off is very low); roller shutter doors; escalators; fall arrest ropes; tipper trucks; and dentist chairs. However, where this equipment is used at work, it will need to be properly maintained and may (in some cases) be subject to inspection under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

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 slip and trip 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

Make a start

Action

1. Identify all the lifting equipment that is used in your premises and by staff.

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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.

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3. Ensure that the precautions you have identified are taken and remain effective, including any maintenance and servicing that may be required.

Make sure any pre-use checks, inspections and thorough examinations are carried out where necessary.

Make a note of any checks or inspections you make.

Guidance

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.).

Remember, some items may not be immediately obvious particularly if they are no longer used or if their use is infrequent.

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

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.

The precautions necessary will depend on the types of lifting equipment you have and your own particular circumstances. These could include those necessary to stop people being injured by:

- 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.

In many cases, proper inspection, maintenance and use of the equipment will prevent injuries from occurring.

Preventing danger from the use of lifting equipment relies in large, on the integrity of the equipment and accessories used.

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.

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A thorough examination is a systematic and detailed examination of the equipment, including any safety-critical 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).

Most equipment will need to be thoroughly examined regularly while it is in service. These should be conducted:

- 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.

However, this periodicity can be varied in some circumstances 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).

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.

They must also provide you with a written report (containing specified information) once they have completed any examination.

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.).

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<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>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, more specialist training may be required.</p>
<p>5. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for the safe use of lifting equipment.</p> <p>Keep the notes you have made in the steps above.</p>	<p>If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record your arrangements 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.</p> <p>In the event of a claim, evidence of what you have done may be important. This could include risk assessments; records of maintenance, inspections and other checks; records of information and training provided; your policy, your accident book etc.</p>

Want to know more?

Other useful health and safety information is available at www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/

Further guidance and resources are also 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.

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