

Provision of Better Lift Service

Introduction

The lift service in a building has been the subject of complaints from time to time. The Building Authority (BA) accepts that occupants of the building may have legitimate cause for concern in some cases. This practice note introduces guidelines on the provision of lifts in buildings for domestic use with a view to enhance standards of lift services, thereby improving the quality of life for the occupants of domestic buildings.

Background

2. Areas of lifts and the lift shafts in a building are measured as gross floor areas (GFA) under Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(a).
3. Except for fireman's lifts and those required to be provided for people with a disability, no requirements and dimensions are spelt out in the Buildings Ordinance and regulations to enable an assessment to be made as to the adequacy of a lift service. To maximize on the usable floor area of a building, the practice has been quite common that only the minimum area is allowed for the provision of lifts, occasionally at the expense of the comfort and convenience of occupants of the building. The BA considers that there is room for improvement in this area.

Quality of Lift Service

4. In general, the quality of lift service depends on a number of factors including the number and size of the lifts provided and their handling capacity, travelling time, waiting time, etc. The following indicate the average standards of lift service :-
 - (a) the average internal sizes of a lift car and its shaft should be 1.82 m^2 and 4.12 m^2 respectively in order to provide a comfortable lift service (according to the advice of the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services);
 - (b) the number of lift to be provided is primarily governed by the building population and the number of storeys to be served; and
 - (c) dimensional standards in relation to rated load, handling capacity and rated speed are specified in the Code of Practice on Building Works for Lifts and Escalators.

Criteria for Exemption

5. The BA acknowledges that improvement in lift provisions in private developments should be encouraged. Having regard to the effects of increasing building density, and in line with current policy on encouraging the provision of amenity features in buildings, the BA will allow the GFA of lift shafts provided over and above the average standard of those currently provided in buildings to be excluded from GFA calculations.

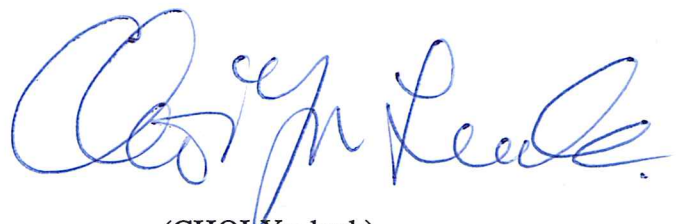
6. Research by Buildings Department on the existing buildings has revealed that the average area of lift shafts in domestic/composite buildings is around 3% of the total GFA. Taking into account that developers may suffer loss in GFA as a result of having to increase the size of a service core to accommodate the enlarged lift shafts and also to provide some incentive to encourage developers to provide better lift service, the BA will, upon application and on the merits of each case, give a modification of B(P)R 23(3)(a) to exempt the area of lift shaft in **domestic and composite buildings including hotels** over and above 2.5% of the total GFA from GFA calculations when the following criteria are met :-

- (a) the internal area of each lift car and lift shaft is not less than 1.82 m² and 4.12 m² respectively; and
- (b) the standards of the lift service are provided to the satisfaction of the Building Authority.

7. The total exempt area for lift shaft should in no case be in excess of 3.5% of the total GFA of the proposed building (i.e. if the lift shaft area is more than 6% of the total GFA then the maximum exempt area will be 3.5% of the total GFA).

Review

8. The situation will be reviewed and if proven effective and conducive to better lift service, the same principle may be extended to other types of buildings in future.



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