

HELP SHEET: STAIRLIFT SAFETY

Modern stairlifts are an extremely safe and reliable means of getting up and down stairs when used correctly. You should always check the manufacturer's instructions for detailed information about an individual stairlift.

How easy are stairlifts to operate?

All modern stairlifts are operated by a switch or toggle, usually on the arm of the stairlift, which is held in the direction of travel to make the lift move. When it is released, the lift will stop.

What happens when the lift is in the wrong location?

Most stair lifts come with remote controls or fixed call buttons which are usually mounted on the wall at the top and bottom of the stairs so that you can call or send the stairlift to a different position as required.

How are stairlifts powered?

Most modern stairlifts are powered by batteries that recharge themselves between trips. The charger is plugged into the mains supply. It is essential that the power supply is always connected otherwise the battery may go completely flat and will need to be replaced. Some older stairlifts may still use mains power.

What happens in a power cut?

Modern battery powered stairlifts should carry on working for 6–8 more trips. Older stairlifts which use mains power will not work in a power cut.

Are there any weight restrictions to using a stairlift?

This depends on the model but most stairlifts have a weight limit of 18–21 stones/ 120–135 kgs. The maximum weight limit is usually indicated on the lift carriage. Please remember that if you carry heavy shopping or other items with you on the stairlift your ‘weight’ may be considerably increased. If you exceed the maximum weight limit the stairlift may not work and damage may be caused to the rail and chair.

Is the stairlift noisy?

Most modern stairlifts are very quiet. You should be able to use the stairlift at any time of the day or night without disturbing your neighbours.

Safety features

There are usually a host of safety features on all stairlifts. These include:

- **Seat belt or harness** – before operating the stairlift you should always use the seat belt or harness provided.
- **Soft start/soft stop** – stairlifts are designed to have a soft slow start and stop so that there are no sudden bumps.

- **Built in safety sensors** on all edges that will detect an obstruction on the stairs e.g. objects that have been dropped. The sensors will respond by automatically stopping the chair so that the obstruction can be removed safely.
 - **Mechanical and electrical breaking systems** – modern stairlifts are fitted with electronic and mechanical fail-safe braking systems to ensure that an uncontrolled descent of the stairlift can not occur.
 - **Lockable on/off switch** – this allows you to disable the lift and prevent unauthorised use so you don't need to worry about unsupervised children playing with the stair lift.
 - **Folding seat and footrest** – this minimises the space taken by the stairlift when not in use, leaving room for other stair users to walk up the stairs safely.
- Stairlifts have to be installed to strict safety standards that do not allow a stair lift to obstruct a staircase or fire evacuation route.

What happens if the stairlift breaks down?

While stairlifts are very simple to use, they are mechanical devices and do require annual servicing and maintenance by qualified engineers. In the unlikely event of a breakdown, please contact your Estate Manager in the first instance to report a repair but if they are not available or your estate does not have one you should:

- Phone Hanover on Call on 0844 892 1013 (local rate number) or you can email them at hanoveroncall@hanover.org.uk
- Hanover on Call will also action your day to day repairs when your estate manager is away or if you do not have an estate manager.
- For emergency repairs outside usual office hours you should either call Hanover on Call on 0844 892 1013 or you can use your emergency alarm system/pull your alarm cord.

Safe use of Stairlifts

- Ensure that the stairway is not being used by others and is clear of articles or obstructions before using the stairlift
- Ensure that pets are out of harms way before using the stairlift
- Relax and sit well back in the seat with your arms on the arm rests and your feet well back on the footrest
- Fasten the seat belt or harness
- Ensure that there are no articles of clothing or equipment that could become entrapped in the stair lift mechanism as this could result in personal injury and/or damage to the equipment.
- Never allow water to come into contact with the components in the stairlift. If you have to transport liquids, please do so with great care.
- The stairlift is designed to carry only one person at a time. Never attempt to carry more than one person.
- Do not exceed the weight limit on the stair lift
- Do not use to transport furniture or other bulky items which could fall off the chair and cause damage or injury.
- Do not allow children to play with the stairlift. For safety, it is advisable to switch off the stairlift and remove the key if there is a risk of tampering by children
- In the unlikely event of a stairlift breakdown whilst you are using the lift, you may wish to consider wearing an alarm call pendant to summon assistance