

Vehicle Lifts, Jacks and Working Under Vehicles

The hazard that kills people in this trade

A vehicle held above a person is a suspended load of one to three tonnes. If it comes down, or if it moves, the person underneath does not get out of the way.

Scope and limitations — read before use

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1. Thorough examination — the legal requirement people miss

- A vehicle lift is lifting equipment under LOLER 1998 and must be thoroughly examined by a competent person at regular intervals, or in accordance with an examination scheme.
- Where lifting equipment is used to lift PEOPLE the interval is at least every 6 months; for other lifting equipment it is at least every 12 months. Take competent advice on the correct interval and scheme for your particular lift and how it is used.
- The report of thorough examination must be kept and available. An inspector will ask for it, and so will your insurer after an incident.
- Thorough examination is NOT the same as a service. A service keeps it working; a thorough examination establishes it is safe.
- Any defect identified as requiring immediate attention means the lift comes out of use until it is put right.

2. Daily and pre-use checks

Check	OK	Defect
Lift arms, pads and adapters undamaged and correct for the vehicle		
Locking devices engage audibly and hold		
No hydraulic leaks under or around the ram		
Controls work correctly, including lower and emergency stop		
Safety devices and interlocks functioning		
Floor around the lift clear, clean and free of oil		
Anchor bolts tight, no movement at the base		

No visible damage, distortion or corrosion to columns or arms		
Thorough examination report in date and available		
Load rating known and adequate for the vehicle		

3. Safe use — the rules that stop people being crushed

- Know the weight of the vehicle and the capacity of the lift. Vans, EVs and 4x4s are far heavier than they look. An electric car can be several hundred kilos heavier than the petrol equivalent.
- Position the pads on the manufacturer's designated lifting points, not on sills, pipes or the floor pan.
- Raise a short distance, stop, and check stability before going up fully.
- ENGAGE THE MECHANICAL LOCKS. Never rely on hydraulics alone to hold a vehicle. Hydraulic seals fail.
- Watch the centre of gravity change during the job. Removing an engine, gearbox or battery pack can tip a vehicle off the lift.
- Use props or stands to support components being removed.
- Never work under a vehicle supported only by a trolley jack. Axle stands, always, rated and on firm level ground.
- Nobody in the workshop moves a lift that somebody else is working under. One person controls it.
- Keep the area under and around the lift clear so people are not tempted to reach in.
- Only trained people operate the lift, and that includes the apprentice and the valet.

4. Lift register and examination record

Lift ID	Type and capacity	Location	Last thorough examination	Report ref	Next due	Defects outstanding

5. Jacks, stands and support equipment

Item	ID	Rated capacity	Last inspection	Next due	Condition

GARAGE & WORKSHOP SAFETY

Assessed by	Signature	Date	Review date