

# Western Elevator Ltd

## Guide to Vertical Lifts & Stair Chair Lifts

For

### Occupational Therapists



# Western Elevator Ltd

## Guide to Vertical Lifts & Stair Chair Lifts

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## **An Introduction to Western Elevator Ltd.**

**Western Elevator Ltd.** is located in Coquitlam at 2425 Canoe Avenue and we *specialize* in the sales, service, and installation of elevating devices for the disabled. Our equipment includes - **residential elevators, residential and commercial handicap elevators, residential and commercial porch lifts, freight lifts, stair lifts (straight & curved) and dumbwaiters.**

Being an independent, privately owned company, we are able to select only the best products from each manufacturers line of products. This means our customers get the very best products available.

Cam Pomeroy and Alan Bodnaruk have over 15 years experience in elevating devices and we look forward to working with you on your next project. Please contact us at 941-2080 (phone) or 941-2081 (fax) should you want to discuss any projects you are currently working on, or to receive product information and literature.

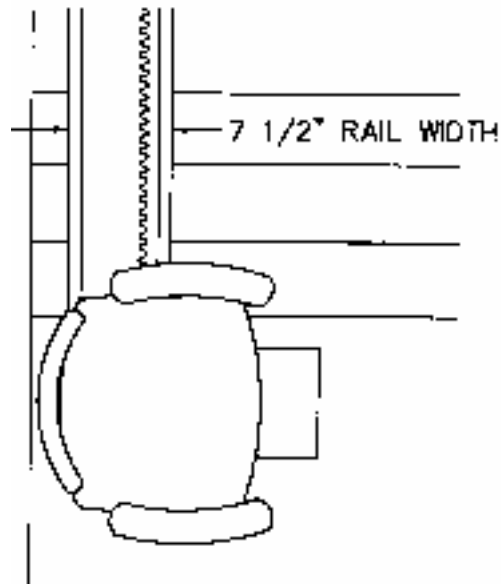
We are registered with the Elevating Devices Branch of British Columbia as a licensed contractor under the Elevating Devices Safety Act. All of our residential installations meet or exceed the CAN/CSA B613 – M87 Standard for Elevating Devices in Private Residences.

If you have any questions regarding a client who needs assistance with access, please phone Cam or Alan at Western Elevator Ltd. and we would be happy to help in any way possible.

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### **Stair Chairs**



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### **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a Stairlift**

#### **1. What is a stairlift?**

The stairlift is a seat on a rail that is bolted to the stair treads on a stairway. The stairlift is sometimes referred to as a stairway lift, stairchair or stair glide.

#### **2. What type of client would require a stairlift?**

The stairlift is appropriate for a client who has difficulty walking up and down stairs but still has the ability to walk a short distance.

The stairlift is also seen as appropriate for clients when mobility is stable and not progressive. If the client has a progressive type of mobility problem e.g. multiple sclerosis, the stairlift is seen as a short-term solution to meeting the client's needs. Some of the common mobility problems that may require a stairlift are: aging, arthritis, heart conditions, breathing problems, strokes, and surgery

#### **3. What does a battery-powered stairlift mean?**

A battery-powered stairlift is a stairlift that runs on a battery. The stairlift battery is charged by a battery charger that is plugged into a regular 110 electrical wall outlet. In order for the unit to work the unit must be charged after each time it is used. Units are charged when parked at the top and bottom of the rail. Each manufacturer offers different units with different features.

#### **4. Is a battery-powered stairlift better than one that is not?**

This is a client's choice. All stairlifts have different standard features and costs will vary. If a client lives in an area where there are frequent power failures, the client will often choose the battery-powered unit.

#### **5. How much space is needed on the stairway, for the stairlift to be installed?**

This space usually varies from each manufacturer. Dealers are required to know the specifications of each unit and interpret these findings to each stairway. Stairways can be as narrow as 30 inches. If the feasibility of the stairway width is in question, have your client sit on a hard chair with his back approximately 8 inches from the wall. Do his knees touch the wall in front of him?

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### **6. What are the stair tread and the stair riser?**

The tread is the flat part of the stair that you step on; think about the tread of your shoe or a tire tread. The riser is the support section of the stair and is found between 2 treads. There is always one additional riser in a set of stairs. The number of risers making up the stairway determines the length of a standard stairlift rail.

### **7. What is the cost of a straight stairlift for a standard set of stairs?**

This varies from unit to unit and from dealer to dealer. A budgetary figure for a straight set of 16 steps or less is less than \$4,000.00

### **8. Does a stairlift have to be CSA approved?**

CSA approved normally refers to the electrical components of the stairlift and yes, it is required in Canada. UL, which is the American Standard, is usually accepted as equal in today's world. There is a CSA standard called B 613 M87 for Elevating Devices for the Handicapped in Private Residences. All products installed must meet or exceed this standard. This is a standard that is not inspected by a governing body, please choose a company that believes in and follows these standards.

### **9. Do you need a building permit when a stairlift is installed?**

At the present time the province of BC does not require the unit to be inspected or licensed by the government. This applies only to the installation in a private residence. Commercial installations MUST be licensed, registered and inspected by the Elevating Devices Branch of the Province of BC. All commercial installations must be installed by a registered licensed Elevator company.

There are ongoing discussions at this time that the Province of BC may soon require a licensed installer to do residential installations and for all residential units to be licensed and inspected by the government.

### **10. Can a stairlift be installed outside a home?**

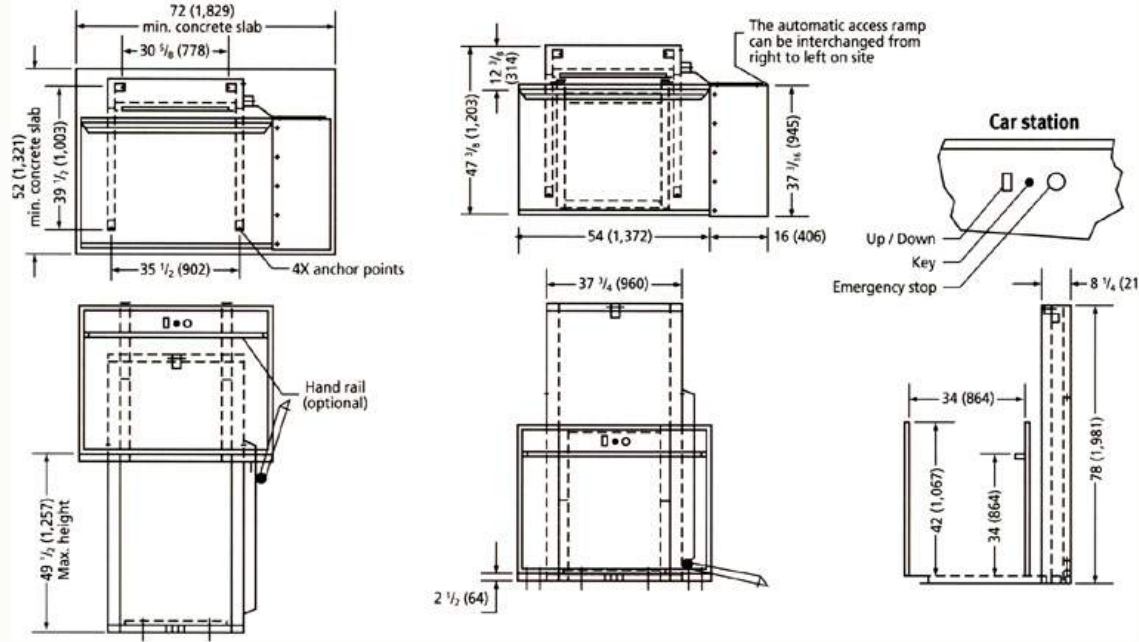
Most manufacturers offer an exterior package for outside installations, however, what features make up this package may differ from manufacturer to manufacturer. Putting a unit outside is really a judgment call on behalf of the people involved. Most areas in Canada have a great deal of snow, rain and ice during the winter months and in these cases it is usually not recommended.

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### Porch Lifts

All dimensions are in inches (millimetres).  
 These drawings should be used for reference purposes only.  
 Measurements can change without notice.



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### **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a Vertical Platform Lift (Porch Lift)**

#### **1. What is a vertical platform lift?**

A vertical platform lift is a platform that moves someone in a vertical direction. It is not used on a stairway.

#### **2. What is a “ porch lift “?**

This is another term used for a vertical platform lift.

#### **3. What is the maximum vertical travel?**

The product used determines the maximum travel available. Manufacturers offer units that travel different heights. The amount of travel required is based on where the client wants to go in his or her home e.g. from the basement to the main floor, the travel ranges from 24’ to 20’.

#### **4. What is the minimum vertical travel for a vertical platform lift?**

Manufacturers offer units from 36 inches of vertical travel and up, but, a unit can be installed and set up to travel a shorter distance e.g. 24’.

#### **5. When would you use a vertical platform lift?**

A vertical platform lift is recommended when access is required to more than one floor in the home; a ramp would not be feasible. If the client is using a wheelchair for mobility, a stairlift is not appropriate.

#### **6. When do you specify a vertical platform lift instead of a ramp?**

The industry usually accepts that if access is any more than 24 inches off grade, a vertical platform lift should be used. If a ramp is considered, the client’s ability to wheel his wheelchair up a ramp is a factor. To have an acceptable grade for a ramp, it is recommended that the minimal grade be 1:12, with some municipalities, requiring 1:18. 1:12 means for every 1 inch of vertical travel, 12 inches of ramp is required. A 36-inch vertical lift would require by code, 36 feet of ramp.

Because the Building Code requires ramps to meet the Code specifications, many ramps become longer and therefore, more fatiguing for a client.

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### 7. Can you put a vertical platform lift outside?

Yes, using a vertical platform lift for wheelchair access into a house is a common practice. Some companies require an exterior package to be added to the standard unit if it is going to be used outside.

### 8. Are call/sends required when you purchase a vertical platform lift?

If the unit is to be used outside for access into the home, I always recommend two call/sends. This means the unit can also be used by a second person that is not on the lift. At night I recommend that the unit be sent down to an inch or so off grade level and then called back up each morning. This will allow any snow to collect on the platform rather than under the platform. Keep in mind snow under the platform acts as a barrier that will cause the unit to stop. For units installed in the home and in a hoistway, call/sends are required at each landing.

### 9. Is an under pan sensor or safety touch plate necessary under the platform?

Yes. A vertical platform lift used as a porch lift should never be installed without one. This plate is a safety feature and will cause a unit to stop in the down motion if it encounters any barrier e.g. snow, animals, toys, small children. It is a must for safety! Keep in mind that the client who is using a wheelchair cannot see what is under him or her when operating the unit. When a unit is installed in a hoistway, a safety touch plate is not necessary because the interlock on each door controls each stop. An under pan safety sensor is mandatory by code for an unenclosed application.

### 10. Can all vertical platform lifts be installed unsupported?

No. It is generally accepted that any unit over 6 feet of travel must have the tower braced to a stationary wall in some way or be installed in a hoistway done by others.

### 11. At what travel height are platform gates required?

If a unit is being used as a porch lift outside and the travel is over 4 feet, it is strongly recommended that gates on the platform be used on all openings. Gates are used for the safety of the client. If travel is over 6 feet and the unit is installed in a hoistway, doors with interlocks should be installed rather than platform gates.

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### 12. Why are interlocks used on doors?

When a vertical platform lift is installed in a hoistway, doors with interlocks are used. The interlock is installed to prevent the door from being opened unless the platform has been called and is at the landing.

### 13. Is a pit needed when installing a vertical platform lift in a hoistway?

A pit may or may not be used for this installation. If a pit is not used, the unit will be above the floor on the lower level landing. It will be therefore necessary to make the landing flush so a person in a wheelchair can access the stop. This is accomplished by using a stationary ramp outside the hoistway. Esthetically, this does not look good but is a less expensive solution to having a pit. Manufacturers specify the pit depth for each product they build.

## 8. Permits, Codes & Taxes

- .1 No permits are needed for residential elevating devices. Currently there is no inspection process to ensure that the lift is manufactured and installed to the CSA Code.
- .2 All residential stair chair lifts and vertical platform lifts installations must meet or exceed the CAN/CSA B-613-M87 code.
- .3 Residential stair chair lifts and vertical platform lifts are currently exempt from GST and PST.

## 9. Warranty & Maintenance

- .1 The lift installation installer shall furnish at no charge maintenance call back service for a period of 3 months.
- .2 This service shall consist of examinations of the equipment, adjustments, lubrication, cleaning, supplies and parts to keep the equipment in operation, EXCEPT such adjustments, parts and supplies or repairs made necessary by abuse, misuse, or any other causes beyond the control of the lift contractor.
- .3 All work will be done by trained employees of the lift installation installer during regular work hours of the trade.
- .4 The warranty period is for one year.  
One-year parts  
90 days labor.