

National Guideline

for

Stairlifts

(RAP Schedule No. AL05 and AL07)

NOTE: PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT **IS REQUIRED** BEFORE THE SUPPLY OF THIS ITEM.

Definition of a stairlift

A stairlift is any type of electrical, hydraulic or battery-operated stair mobility equipment that assists an individual while sitting or standing to access different levels in their home (internally and externally).

Use of a stairlift

A stairlift may be provided for an individual’s use in their own home subject to the criteria within this Guideline.

Types of stairlifts and accessories

There are six different types of stairlifts listed in RAP Schedule AL05 and AL07. They are:

1. Stairchair
2. Wheelchair Platform Lifts (for step rail)
3. Inclinator
4. Waterlift
5. Stairclimber
6. Vertical Platform Lift

1. Stairchair (AL05)

A stairchair may be defined as a seat attached to the banister, which when activated, will go up and down a staircase.

Stairchairs are most commonly used in private dwellings. When the person requiring a stairchair uses a mobility aid such as a walking frame or wheelchair, it is essential to have this aid at each level for independent mobility. Ability to transfer on/off the stairchair (presently and in the future) needs to be considered. The controls are usually located on the arms of the chair, and also at either end of the staircase. Different models are available for indoor and outdoor use. Some stairchairs have swivel seats for easier transferring.

2. Wheelchair Platform Lifts (AL05)

A Wheelchair Platform Lift is a platform device, when activated, transports a wheelchair up and down a staircase.

Wheelchair Platform Lifts are more commonly installed in public areas as a wider stairway is required, although they may also be installed in a private home. The platform folds against the wall when the lift is not in use, providing clear access to the stairwell.

Attendant and carer controls can be provided on all lifts, and are especially necessary in a public area. The platform lift will have access and exit ramps to be used at landings. These can be operated electrically or mechanically. Different models are available for indoor and outdoor use.

3. Inclinator (AL05)

Inclinators are designed to transport people up steep slopes. The inclinator can operate over angles up to 45 degrees (or gradient of ½). The inclinator is operated by control buttons. It can be stopped or reversed as desired and the carriage can be called from one level to another.

4. Waterlifts (AL05)

A waterlift is a hydraulic elevator that can be installed internally or externally. There are state restrictions pertaining to the installation of waterlifts, for example the NSW building code does not allow such devices.

5. Stairclimbers (AL05)

Stairclimbers are individual pieces of equipment that assist a person up and down the steps, but are not installed fixtures.

6. Vertical Platform Lifts (AL07)

Vertical Platforms Lifts are installed adjacent to vertical walls, and travel up and down. The platform finishes flat against the floor, and the user embarks and disembarks onto an even surface.

There are several different types of vertical platform lifts available, and can be internal or external.

There is an Australian Standard AS1735 which covers lifts, and Part 14 of this Standard specifies requirements for machine-driven low-rise platforms which raise people to a vertical point of 600mm. Part 15 of AS1735 applies to vertical platforms which raise people to heights exceeding 600mm. These latter lifting devices are subject to approval by Workcover Authority, and are required for inspection, both after installation and prior to human use.

NB: Vertical Platform Lifts will only be supplied in respect of a war caused injury or disease/accepted disability.

This applies to both Gold and White Card holders.

Australian Standards

Stairchairs, Wheelchair Platform Lifts and Inclinators are covered by AS1735.12.

Vertical Platform Lifts are covered by AS1735, in particular Parts 14 & 15.

Waterlifts are covered by AS1735, in particular Parts 3 & 17: "Electrohydraulic lifts" and "Waterdrive lifts".

Stairclimbers are not covered by an Australian Standard. If Australian Standards are developed, compliance will be required.

Governing body

Each State and Territory has an agency that oversees the installation and subsequent periodic inspections of stairlifts. An annual fee may be payable for registration. The Department will meet this expense.

Accommodation with shared access

The Department does not supply stairlifts to entitled persons who require the stairlift to be installed on a public access route.

Assessment

An assessment and report by an occupational therapist is required to:

- provide clinical, functional and cognitive information to the Department to support the need for a stairlift; *and*
- decide, in partnership with a supplier and the entitled person (and/or their carer/representative), which type of stairlift is most suitable; *and*
- provide advice and any necessary training for the entitled person/carer; *and*
- advise the entitled person/carer that the Department may not fund the repairs or make good the area when the stairlift is removed.

Criteria

The following criteria must be met before approval will be given for the issue of a stairlift:

- A ramp or similar construction is not a suitable option
- The entitled person should:
 - be permanently incapable of negotiating stairs without risk of injury to themselves or others;
 - be unable to relocate to more suitable accommodation because existing social supports cannot be replicated at the new location;
 - own their own home which should be an individual residence that does not share access with other buildings;
 - not have been reasonably able to judge that access was likely to become an issue; and
 - be unable to relocate to other accessible areas of the house.

Notification to the Health Provider

The notification to the Health Provider should include details regarding their responsibility to undertake regular reviews of the entitled person's condition in order that he/she continues to meet the criteria.

Notification to the entitled person

The notification to the entitled person should include:

- details of the entitled person's responsibilities as listed in the section "Entitled Person's Responsibilities"; and
- advice that the stairlift remains the property of the Department, and that the Department has the right to withdraw it if:
 - the entitled person ceases to meet the criteria, or
 - the entitled person no longer requires the stairlift; and
- advice that the entitled person or their estate may be responsible for "making good" following the removal of the stairlift; and
- advice that the entitled person is responsible for using the stairlift in a safe manner, according to the regulations outlined by the OT, the supplier and/or the governing body; and
- advice that preventative maintenance is the responsibility of the supplier.