

The 15-Year Lift Checklist

10 questions your council should ask — and be able to answer — before deciding whether to repair, overhaul, or replace your lifts.

Somewhere between the 15th and 20th year, every lift installation reaches a decision point: continue maintaining, modernise selectively, or plan for full replacement. It is one of the largest capital decisions a building will face — and it should be made on **evidence, not assumption**. Work through these ten questions at your next council meeting. Any question the council cannot answer confidently marks a gap in the information the decision depends on.

- 1** **What is the documented condition of each lift's major components — not just its age?**

Why it matters: Controllers, drives, door operators, and hoisting equipment all age at different rates. Two lifts installed the same year can be in profoundly different condition at year 17 — so the calendar alone cannot answer the repair-or-replace question.

- 2** **Are spare parts for our controller and drive still readily available — and what are the lead times?**

Why it matters: Obsolescence often forces the decision before physical wear does. A controller can function perfectly today yet belong to a generation for which parts and supplier support are steadily disappearing.

- 3** **What is our breakdown trend over the past 24 months — frequency, downtime, and repeat faults?**

Why it matters: A single breakdown means little; a worsening trend means a lot. The same fault recurring after repair is a particularly telling signal that the underlying issue is not being resolved.

- 4** **How much have we spent on repairs outside the maintenance contract in the past three years?**

Why it matters: Rising out-of-contract repair spend is one of the earliest economic signals that an installation is entering its decision window — and it is already in your accounts, waiting to be totalled.

- 5** **Whose assessment of the lifts are we relying on — and what is their commercial interest in the outcome?**

Why it matters: A contractor who recommends modernisation may also be bidding for the works. That does not make the advice wrong — but the council should know whether any independent party has verified the equipment's actual condition.

6 If we modernise, exactly which components need replacement — and which are genuinely still sound?

Why it matters: Selective modernisation only saves money if the retained equipment truly has years of reliable service left. Done indiscriminately, it means paying to replace parts that were still sound — or keeping parts that were not.

7 What would full replacement cost — and how does our sinking fund position compare against that timeline?

Why it matters: Major lift works must be provided for years in advance. A council that knows its position at year 15 can plan contributions calmly; a council that discovers it at year 22 — through a failure — faces the same expense on a compressed timeline.

8 How would major lift works be phased to minimise disruption to residents?

Why it matters: Modernisation or replacement takes each lift out of service for weeks. For buildings with only one or two lifts per block, the sequencing of works matters as much to residents as the works themselves.

9 If we defer the decision three to five years, what are the risks — and can we evidence that deferral is safe?

Why it matters: Deferring is also a decision. Done on evidence, it extracts full value from sound equipment. Done on hope, it risks declining reliability and a major expense arriving before the funds have been built up.

10 Do we hold documentation that would justify our decision to subsidiary proprietors?

Why it matters: Whichever path the council chooses, owners will ask why. A photo-evidenced, independent record of the lifts' condition protects the council — it shows the decision was made with proper oversight, on facts.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Table these ten questions at your next council or AGM preparation meeting. Tick each question the council can answer with current, documented evidence. Unticked questions are the gaps — and most of them are answered by one exercise: an independent, photo-evidenced assessment of the lifts' actual condition.

Want the answers, not just the questions?

Vertical Acumen provides independent lift assessments for Singapore MCSTs and building owners — photo-evidenced findings, component-by-component condition, and prioritised recommendations that give your council an objective basis for the repair, overhaul, or replace decision.

+65 8373 0800

enquiry@verticalacumen.com

www.verticalacumen.com