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VEHICLE LIFT INSPECTIONS PROTECT WORKERS AND EQUIPMENT

BUT YOU SHOULDN'T TRUST JUST ANYONE

BY BOB O'GORMAN

When your customers bring their vehicles in for regularly-scheduled maintenance, your Technicians likely inspect all vehicle systems to make sure everything is functioning properly. That's because regular inspections help identify small issues before they grow into major problems. It's often easier for you and more cost-effective for the customer to fix an issue early, rather than wait for something to fail.

The same logic applies to vehicle lifts. By having every lift in your facility inspected annually, you can help increase the life of the lifts and protect the health of the Technicians who use them. But just as you know that not all vehicle Service Technicians are trained in proper OEM repair procedures or certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), not all lift inspectors should be trusted to inspect your lifts.

Who is qualified to inspect your lifts? What will they look for during the inspection? The answers to these questions were not very clear until the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) introduced the country's first third-party certification for vehicle lift inspectors in 2012. Today, dealers across North America can rely on the ALI Lift Inspector Certification Program to find inspectors who have been independently tested and qualified to properly inspect vehicle lifts of any kind.



ALI Certified Lift Inspectors are qualified to inspect any type of vehicle lift built by any manufacturer, so they can take care of an entire facility at one time.



Annual vehicle lift inspections conducted by qualified inspectors can help increase the life of your lifts and protect the health of the technicians who use them. Inspectors can often identify lift issues before they become major problems, which prevents emergency repairs and costly downtime.

Lift inspection basics

Your Service Technicians should make a habit of checking their vehicle lifts daily for wear, corrosion, unusual noises and fluid levels. A qualified lift inspector should also inspect each lift as directed by the owner's manual, at least annually. When the time comes for an annual inspection, a qualified lift inspector will travel to your facility and evaluate each lift's operating mechanisms, safety systems, structural integrity, modifications and maintenance. Depending on the number of lifts in the shop and the thoroughness of the inspector, the process could take anywhere from a few hours to a full day.

If the inspector identifies a potential issue with one of your lifts, he or she should bring it to your attention. Often, a regularly-maintained and inspected vehicle lift in need of necessary repairs can be serviced at your convenience, which prevents costly downtime and helps ensure that parts will be available.

Lift inspections and safety enforcement

Annual vehicle lift inspections don't just protect workers and prevent emergency fixes. In the United States, they are also required under work bay standards approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and sponsored by ALI, an ANSI Accredited Standards Developer and Product Safety Certification Organization.

ANSI oversees the issuance of more than 35,000 standards that cover safety, performance, materials, procedures and testing. While many of the safety standards address known shop hazards, the standard that specifically covers vehicle lift inspection, operation and maintenance is ANSI/ALI ALOIM-2008 (R2013).

This is important to you because health and safety officials rely on guidance from industry standards like ANSI/ALI ALOIM-2008 (R2013) when making determinations about the safety of vehicle service facilities. Industry news reports have shown that over the past several

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To ensure each vehicle lift inspection is thorough, ALI Certified Lift Inspectors follow a standardized procedure that is approved by the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) in accordance with nationally recognized safety standards.

ALI Certified Lift Inspectors are qualified to inspect any type of vehicle lift built by any manufacturer. They assess the lift, bay and shop, and provide written reports with repair recommendations to the Fixed Ops Manager or Supervisor.

years, a rise in employee personal injury litigation, a flood of untested products being dumped into the North American equipment marketplace, and the fact that the Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports that thousands of Service and repair workers are treated for shop injuries each year, have driven these officials to increase their focus on vehicle Service providers. That's why it's more crucial now than ever before that your facility is in compliance with industry safety standards.

Since ANSI/ALI ALOIM-2008 (R2013) stipulates that a qualified lift inspector should inspect lifts at least annually, you can help to protect your business against vehicle lift-related health and safety citations and fines by scheduling yearly inspections.

The importance of inspector certification

Annual vehicle lift inspections can help protect your dealership, but you must be mindful of who you hire to conduct them. ALI Certified Lift Inspectors are the only professional inspectors who are tested by the Automotive Lift Institute and proven qualified to inspect vehicle lifts in accordance with ANSI/ALI ALOIM-2008 (R2013).

Although lift inspection requirements were first written into industry standards in the early 1990s, no third-party inspector certification or accreditation program existed until the ALI Lift Inspector Certification Program was introduced in 2012. Before its launch, lift users were left to decide for themselves whether or not an inspector was qualified. This "buyer beware" environment could be confusing at times and industry leaders spoke out about the need for

inspector certification. As a result, ALI invested several years and more than \$700,000 to develop North America's first third-party certification program for vehicle lift inspectors. ALI, a trade association of North American-based lift manufacturers, sees the program as a natural extension of the lift safety programs it manages in service of its mission to promote the safe design, construction, installation, service, inspection and use of automotive lifts.

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To enroll in the ALI Lift Inspector Certification Program, an inspector candidate must have at least 12 months of experience inspecting vehicle lifts.





Each candidate must pass a pre-course exam, a course exam and conduct a series of practical experience inspections representing each of the seven major lift types before being granted certification.

Using the two exams, ALI is able to qualify individuals who are capable of inspecting any type of vehicle lift built by any manufacturer. ALI Certified Lift Inspectors are tested to ensure they are competent to thoroughly inspect vehicle lifts and keep lift owners knowledgeable of their compliance with OSHA's General Duty Clause.

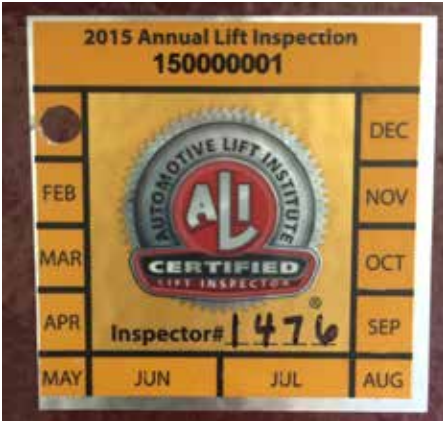
“THERE ARE MORE THAN 200 ALI CERTIFIED LIFT INSPECTORS ACROSS THE U.S. AND CANADA. TO MAKE IT EASY FOR DEALERS TO FIND INSPECTORS IN THEIR AREAS, ALI HAS DEVELOPED AN ONLINE DATABASE OF ALI CERTIFIED LIFT INSPECTORS.”



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An ALI Certified Lift Inspector will apply a dated label to each lift that passes inspection, so it's clear to you, your Technicians, clients and health and safety officials when the last inspection took place.



More than 200 lift inspectors across the United States and Canada have completed the ALI Lift Inspector Certification Program since its inception in 2012. To achieve certification, each candidate must pass a pre-course exam, a course exam and conduct a series of practical experience inspections that cover the seven major lift types.

While inspecting your lifts, Certified Lift Inspectors follow a standardized procedure that's approved by ALI in accordance with the nationally recognized safety standard, so they will not overlook something a non-certified inspector might miss. They assess the lift, bay and shop, and provide written reports with any repair recommendations to the Fixed Ops Director or Supervisor. The inspector then applies a dated label to each lift that passes inspection, so it's clear to you, your Technicians, clients and any health and safety officials when the last inspection took place.

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During a vehicle lift inspection, an ALI Certified Lift Inspector will evaluate the lift's operating mechanisms, safety systems, structural integrity, modifications and maintenance.



ALI Certified Lift Inspectors are tested by the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) to ensure they are competent to thoroughly inspect vehicle lifts and inform lift owners about compliance with OSHA's General Duty Clause. Each candidate who completes the certification program is assigned an individual inspector number.

Finding a certified inspector

Today, there are more than 200 ALI Certified Lift Inspectors across the U.S. and Canada. To make it easy for dealers to find inspectors in their areas, ALI has developed an online database of ALI Certified Lift Inspectors. The searchable database can be accessed at www.autolift.org/dealer.php. Simply enter your ZIP code, select a preferred radius to search and filter by state, if needed. Each database entry includes the inspector's individual certification number, company, contact information and photo. The database is growing rapidly as new inspector candidates complete the program requirements.

our most-preferred customers bring their cars, trucks and SUVs to you for regular checkups. Follow their example and take ownership of safety at your facility by scheduling annual lift inspections with an ALI Certified Lift Inspector. Your equipment should last longer, you could avoid costly health and safety citations and an inspection might turn up something that may just save a Technician's life. After all, their safety is riding on it.



R.W. "Bob" O'Gorman is the President of ALI. For more information, visit www.autolift.org

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