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Fixed ops



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DON'T SETTLE FOR AN INFERIOR LIFT INSPECTION

ANNUAL INSPECTIONS CAN PROTECT YOUR TECHNICIANS AND YOUR BUSINESS

BY BOB O'GORMAN

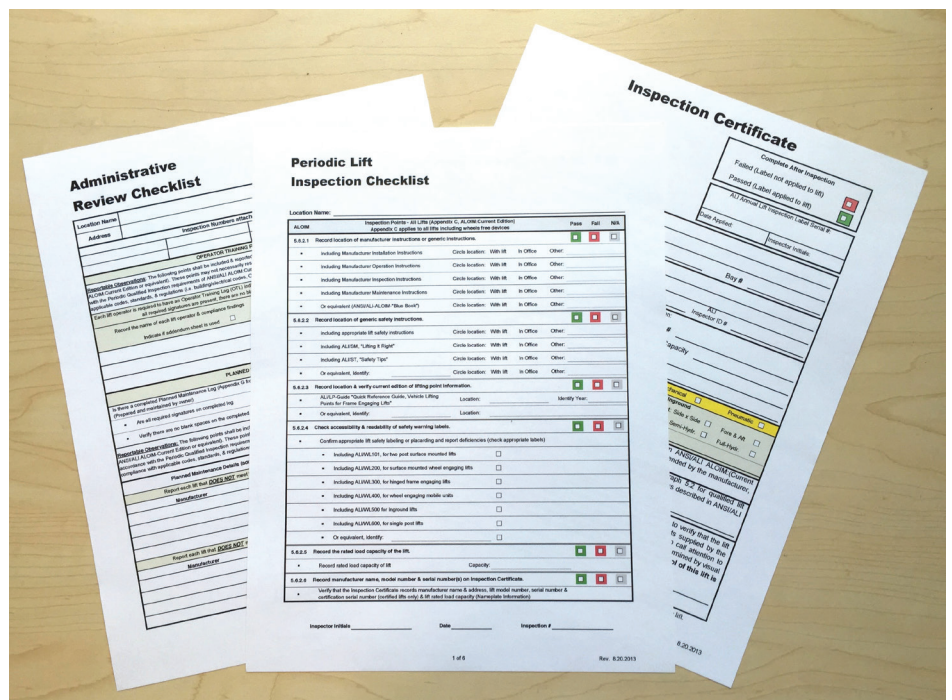
Know what you're paying for. It's one of the basic rules of business, and for Fixed Ops Managers, it applies every time you buy a vehicle lift, tire changer, alignment rack or other shop equipment. As health and safety officials increase their scrutiny of car dealers and other automotive Service facilities, it's crucial to also know what you are paying for when it comes to your dealership's annual lift inspections. The cheapest option may not be the most comprehensive and could leave your business vulnerable.

In the past, unless you were an expert on the inner workings of a vehicle lift, it could be hard to know if you were getting your money's worth from a lift inspection. Each inspector had his or her own procedures and the customer would have to rely on the inspector's judgment. The Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) launched its Lift Inspector Certification Program in 2012 in order to provide a national resource for standardized lift inspection procedures as well as qualified lift inspectors to perform those inspections.

All ALI Certified Lift Inspectors have been third-party tested and proven qualified to inspect any model, type or brand of vehicle lift using standardized lift inspection protocols. Every ALI Certified Lift Inspector must demonstrate an ability to apply

their lift inspection knowledge when using inspection checklists, certificates and supporting documentation during a lift inspection. These comprehensive inspection procedures and materials were developed and refined over several years by a knowledgeable committee led by ALI representatives,

including lift manufacturers, engineers, installers, distributors, inspectors, trainers and other industry experts, to ensure that every lift type and all of the essential inspection points critical to this industry are addressed.



An ALI Certified Lift Inspector will leave you with extensive documentation for each lift inspected so you will have clear evidence that your lift, operator training logs and maintenance plans meet the requirements found in the national standard covering lift operation, inspection and maintenance.



All ALI Certified Lift Inspectors have been tested and proven qualified to inspect any model, type or brand of vehicle lift using an industry-created lift inspection process.

When you hire an ALI Certified Lift Inspector to evaluate Service bay safety in your shop using ALI's requirements, the experience may differ from inspections you have received in the past. The process may take longer, since it's likely more comprehensive. It may even be priced differently. As the industry continues to transition, some lift inspection companies may begin to offer multiple tiers of lift inspection services. These inspections may vary in terms of what they actually address and how much they cost.

Remember: only lift inspections performed by ALI Certified Lift Inspectors in accordance with the industry-created procedures and materials are guaranteed to conform with the requirements of ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013), the national standard for vehicle lift operation, inspection and maintenance.

At the conclusion of each inspection performed under ALI's process, you will receive a copy of the comprehensive inspection report and an Inspection Certificate for each lift. Most importantly, every lift that passes will be labeled with

an ALI Annual Lift Inspection Label that includes the inspector's four-digit ID number and ALI's Certified Lift Inspector logo. Each of these labels also carries an individual serial number that is always referenced within the inspection report. The absence of ALI's Annual Lift Inspection Label is an indication that your lift 1) was not inspected in accordance with the requirements of ALI's program, or 2) that it failed to meet the safety requirements defined within the National Standard, and corrective action with follow-up is required.

(To find a local ALI Certified Lift Inspector, visit the online directory at www.autolift.org and select "Find a Certified Inspector.")

There are three parts to a lift inspection process that complies with ANSI's national safety standard. While the physical assessment of the lift's electrical and mechanical components may be the first thing you think about when considering lift inspections, it's actually only one part of the process. Here is a primer on each evaluation area, so you know what to expect from a thorough lift inspection:

Part I: Operator Training

The ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013) standard requires employers to document their employees' lift operation training. This can be done using the operator training log found in the ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013) book that is available from ALI, its members and those inspection service providers certified by the ALI.

To ensure compliance with the national standard, the ALI Certified Lift Inspector will include a review of the operator training logs for each lift. The inspector will confirm that a complete training log exists for each operator of the lift and that the log has been updated within the last 12 months. Any lift operator deficiencies are included in the report so that corrective action can be taken. Required operator training materials include lift manufacturer instructions, warning labels, as well as several publications from the ALI: the Automotive Lift Safety Tips card, Lifting Points Guide and Lifting It Right safety manual.



Each ALI Certified Lift Inspector is proven capable of conducting a comprehensive vehicle lift inspection using industry-created documentation. The three-part inspection process includes reviews of operator training and planned maintenance logs, and a mechanical analysis with 40 to 120 inspection points, depending on the lift type and accessories.

The ALI also offers Lifting It Right: On-line Edition, a full online lift safety training course hosted by Richard and Kyle Petty that covers lifting, lowering and maintenance for a variety of lift types. Because the course is online, dealerships can have their technicians take it individually at a convenient time and place. At the conclusion of the course, a certificate of completion is generated and stored online. It can also be printed and displayed or filed if desired, making it easy for the lift inspector, corporate safety officers and health and safety officials to verify that the training took place. Ask your ALI Certified Lift Inspector for details.

Part II: The Lift Inspection

The electrical and mechanical evaluation of the lift in accordance with ALI's Lift Inspector Certification Program includes a detailed inspection process addressing as many as 40 and up to 120 inspection points, depending on the lift type and accessories.

During the evaluation, the inspector will ensure that required safety warning labels are present on each lift and that the operating instructions and vehicle lifting point reference materials are readable and accessible to the operator at all times.

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Depending on the requirements of corporate safety officers or other types of health and safety officials having jurisdiction, this may require placement of these important safety items on each lift or in each Service bay. For any vehicle lift, an inspector per-

forming the evaluation will look at the lift's welds, structure, electrical wiring and controls. All controls should be located where they provide an unobstructed view of the lift. Structural cracks, deformation, broken wires or missing pieces could cause the lift to fail the inspection.

The ALI's inspection process also provides specific guidance about what to look for on runway, swing arm, mobile column, hydraulic, screw and pneumatic lifts, to name a few. The inspector will check chains, wire ropes and electrical components. Any damage or signs of abuse to these components could cause the lift to fail the inspection.

In addition to examining particular lift components, the inspector will raise and lower the lift with a representative vehicle loaded on it to ensure the lowering speed is compliant and to observe lift function when stopped in a raised position. The lift inspector will also verify that all controls automatically return to the neutral or off position when released.

The ALI Certified Inspector will provide you with a copy of the completed report at the conclusion of the inspection, making it very clear what was inspected and whether or not each point passed.



A serialized label is applied to each lift that passes a comprehensive inspection conducted by an ALI Certified Lift Inspector. The label makes it easy for Fixed Ops Managers and health and safety officials to see at a glance if the lift's inspection is up-to-date.

Part III: Planned Maintenance

ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013) also stipulates that planned maintenance be in place for each lift. When created in accordance with the lift manufacturer's recommendations, planned maintenance can go a long way toward supporting a lift's reliability and continued safe operation.

This part of the lift inspection should be a review of the lift's planned maintenance log. A planned maintenance log should list the lift's designated maintenance person and company, future dates for planned maintenance and any services completed and parts replaced. A sample planned maintenance log is included in the ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013) standard.

The ALI Lift Inspector Certification Program covers more than 100 steps that should be included in each lift inspection. An inferior inspection may include just a fraction of those steps. Historically, many inspections have left out the training and planned maintenance reviews altogether.

Why is this important?

1) Training and planned maintenance are as important a tool in the Service bay as the lift itself. Here's an example: there has been an influx of lift models on the market

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that are not ALI Certified in compliance with industry safety standards. Many lack the required product labeling, warnings and instructions, and may even lack documentation demonstrating appropriate design and product quality control.

Lift operator training enables those in the Service bay to identify critical safety aspects that may be missing, regardless of the reason. Planned maintenance, when combined with a trained operator familiar with the lift, is usually a shop's primary means of identifying the need for service or repair.

2) Health and safety officials rely on guidance from nationally recognized industry safety standards when making determinations about the safety of a service bay. Since ALI's inspection process was developed to cover all of the requirements found in the ANSI/ALI ALOIM (R2013) standard, it provides assurance that no safety issues that officials check for will be overlooked.

As noted previously, at the end of a comprehensive inspection performed by an ALI Certified Lift Inspector, a label that shows when the inspection took place will be applied to each lift that passes. This label makes it easy for Fixed Operations Managers and health and safety officials to see at a glance if the lift's inspection is up-to-date. The inspector will provide the Fixed Ops Manager with a detailed report of what was checked and any issues that should be remedied. He or she will also be able to help supply any missing manuals or safety materials. The label and documentation for each step of the three-part process serve as proof that the ALI Certified Lift Inspector provided you with a thorough inspection in accordance with industry-created, ALI program guidelines.

Remember: you get what you pay for. It is up to you to take responsibility for the safety of your employees and the integrity of your facility by insisting on the most comprehensive lift inspection available. Armed with knowledge of the inspection process, you can help protect your workers, while simultaneously presenting a more professional shop environment for your customers and minimizing the risk of health and safety penalties



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