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Safety Features on Stairlifts



Stairlifts are a vital improvement to any home where the resident struggles to climb up or down the stairs. They help to remove the need to struggle, and are a much cheaper alternative to converting downstairs rooms into a bedroom or bathroom, and definitely much cheaper than moving to a single story home or bungalow. However, when buying a stairlift, peace of mind is the most important feature.

There are a number of safety standards on all stairlifts from reputable manufacturers. These safety standards are specified under the current British Safety Standards for stairlifts, and this is updated every few years or so to ensure paramount safety on stairlifts. It is important to make sure a stairlift has all of the following essential safety features and not just look for a cheap deal.

For safety reasons, all stairlifts must have a seat belt. This is usually in the form of a retractable lap belt, and gives you an added sense of security as you're travelling up or down the stairs via the stairlift.

A very important safety feature on a stairlift are the built in safety sensors. These automatically detect any possible obstruction to the stairlift and, if any obstructions



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are found, it immediately brings the stairlift to a complete stop. Once the object obstructing the stairlifts' path is removed, the stairlift continues its journey along the stairs in the direction it was already travelling in. These are normally located around the footrest area, so even lower objects are detected.

A limit sensor is fitted on the top and bottom of the stairlift rail. The limit sensors make sure that, when reaching the end of the rail at either end, the stairlift stops in the correct position. It also ensures that the stairlift comes to a soft stop. A smooth start stop motion is vital so as well as coming to a soft stop, the stairlift should have a slow, gentle start rather than a jerky start. This removes the risk of injury when the stairlift starts or stops.

Your stairlift should have a lockable on/ off key switch. This is in place to prevent anyone, particularly young children, from using or activating the stairlift in any way without the key. For this reason, the key is removable after locking.

There shouldn't be a risk of receiving an electric shock providing the stairlift is a battery powered (DC) stairlift. This means that there is no mains power voltage on the stairlift, as it runs off 24 volt batteries only. These are rechargeable and, as well as ensuring smooth, quiet travel along the rail, it also means that the stairlift can run even during a power cut. Charging points are located at both ends of the rail meaning the stairlift charges when not in use.

A stairlift should have a dual mechanical and electrical braking system. These are two independent braking systems meaning that, in the event of a motor failure, the stairlift cannot descend unexpectedly or at too great of a speed.

A swivel seat is vital on a stairlift, and it must lock into position at the end of the stairs. As the name suggests, this swivels the seat of the stairlift around to allow you to dismount from the stairlift with ease. Also, because the stairlift locks into place it acts as a barrier to prevent you from falling back down the stairs due to loss of balance, etc. This is essential, especially when dismounting from the stairlift at the top of the stairs.



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