

Lift Mechanic interview questions

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What to expect

Lift mechanic interviews combine technical depth with safety judgement. Employers need to know you can find faults on equipment that varies by manufacturer, and that you will not put a car back in service until you are satisfied it is safe.

- **Technical fault finding:** How you read diagrams, use test instruments and narrow down electrical and mechanical faults on controllers, doors and drive systems.
- **Safety and isolation:** Your approach to lockout, working at heights, machine room procedure and the rules you apply when a lift is not fit for service.
- **Scenario under pressure:** What you do when a lift stops with passengers inside, or when something fails mid-job.
- **Compliance and testing:** How you test and certify to Australian Standards, what you record, and what happens when a reading falls outside tolerance.
- **Client-facing and behavioural:** How you deal with building managers, tenants and time pressure, usually explored through past examples.

Most employers start with a phone screen from a recruiter or service manager covering your licence, experience and availability for after-hours work. That is followed by a technical interview with a supervisor or leading hand, often with a practical component on a lift, a simulator or a fault board. Final steps usually include checks on your electrical licence, working at heights ticket, medical and police clearance, and reference calls.

1. Walk me through how you'd approach a scheduled maintenance visit on a lift you haven't worked on before.

Why they ask

Employers want to see a repeatable routine rather than a technician who improvises on unfamiliar equipment.

How to structure your answer

Give a sequenced walk-through, segment by segment: site setup and isolation, service history review, doors, controller, full travel test, safety device testing, then documentation.

Example answer

"First I'd check the site log and the lift's service history so I know what I'm walking into, then set up barricades, signage and lockout at the main isolator before touching anything. Doors come first, because that's where most call-backs come from, so I check the door operator, gibbs, rollers and safety edges. Then into the controller for fault codes and any sign of heat or loose terminations. I'd run the car through the full travel to listen for noise and check levelling, and test each safety device rather than assuming it's fine. Before I leave I record what I did, what I found and what needs parts, and log it in the maintenance system so the next technician isn't starting cold."

2. Tell me about a time you diagnosed an intermittent fault that others had missed.

Why they ask

Intermittent faults are the hardest part of the job and reveal how methodical and persistent a technician is.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Situation, the fault and why it mattered; Task, what you were asked to do; Action, the specific steps you took; Result, what changed afterwards.

Example answer

"At a previous company one of the cars kept stopping between floors every few days, and it had been signed off twice as no fault found. The building manager asked me to have another look because tenants were getting frustrated. I started riding the car during the busy period instead of quiet times, and noticed it only tripped under repeated use. I traced it to a door operator contact that tested fine cold but opened up after cycling, so I watched a multimeter while I cycled the doors, then swapped in a spare operator to confirm it. The fault didn't come back after I replaced the contact block, and the site stopped logging those call-backs. I wrote it up so other technicians knew the pattern to look for."

3. You're mid-service when a lift stops with passengers inside. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests whether safety and passenger welfare come before speed, and whether you know the release procedure for the equipment.

How to structure your answer

Use a priority order: secure the situation, communicate with passengers, follow the approved release procedure, then investigate and report.

Example answer

"First I make sure nobody else gets hurt, so I stop what I'm doing, keep the area clear and confirm the car has stopped where the doors can't be forced open. I use the intercom to speak to the passengers, tell them my name, that I'm a licensed technician, that they're safe and that I'm working on getting them out. Then I follow the release procedure for that model, normally from the machine room or the landing, with a second person if the procedure calls for it. I don't climb on the car or force doors. Once they're out I check no one needs medical attention, then work out what caused the stop before the lift goes back in service, and record it so the building manager knows what happened and why."

4. How do you use a circuit diagram to trace a fault in a lift controller?

Why they ask

The interviewer is checking whether you can reason through interlocking safety circuits rather than swapping parts until something works.

How to structure your answer

Describe your method step by step and name the instruments and references you'd use. Depth matters more than speed here.

Example answer

"I start with the section of the drawing that matches the symptom rather than the whole sheet. If the car won't level, I'm looking at the levelling switches, the door zone inputs and the drive section. I'd put a meter across the supply and the relevant contacts to confirm what voltage is actually present, and use the oscilloscope where a signal is intermittent or noisy. On newer gear I pull fault codes from the proprietary diagnostic software, which usually narrows it to a board or an input before I start probing. I keep the drawing with me and tick off each node as I test it, because it's easy to lose track on a controller with a lot of interlocking safety circuits, and every one of those has to be proven to be in the right state."

5. A building manager wants a lift back in service before you're satisfied it's safe. How do you handle that?

Why they ask

This is a values question about whether you'll hold the line on safety while keeping a working relationship with the client.

How to structure your answer

Acknowledge the pressure, restate your safety obligation plainly, offer concrete options, then finish with what you'd document and escalate.

Example answer

"I'd acknowledge that the outage is causing them real problems, because it usually is. Then I'd be clear about what I can and can't sign off. If the lift isn't safe, it stays out of service, that part isn't negotiable. What I can do is give them options: the part may be available today or tomorrow, I can look at a temporary measure if the manufacturer allows it, or I can prioritise the repair as soon as the part lands. I'd put the situation in writing, including what's been isolated and why, so there's no confusion, and I'd keep them updated rather than going quiet. If they keep pushing, I'd ask my supervisor to speak with them so they hear the same message from the company."

6. How do you make sure a lift or escalator you've tested meets Australian Standards before handover?

Why they ask

Compliance is the backbone of the role, and employers want to hear that you test against the standard rather than from memory.

How to structure your answer

Work through the compliance steps in order: applicable standard, tests due at that interval, tolerances, evidence recorded, sign-off, and what you'd do if something fell outside tolerance.

Example answer

"Before I start I confirm which part of AS 1735 applies to the unit and what tests are due for that service interval. Then I run through them in order: safety gear and governor, buffers, door interlocks and safety edges, alarm and communication, levelling and stopping accuracy, and the emergency release. For escalators it's the skirt, comb and brake tests. I record the actual readings rather than a tick, so there's evidence behind the certificate. If something is outside tolerance, I don't issue the test result. I isolate it, tag it out, report it to the building owner and the company, and we schedule the repair. Once it's fixed I repeat the full test before anything goes back into service."