

Emergency Telephones in Passenger Elevators and Vertical Platform Lifts

Emergency Telephones in Passenger Elevators Traveling 60' or More

ASME A17.1 (2000), 2.27.1.1.2 requires elevators traveling 60' or more to be equipped with a device for two-way conversation (telephone or intercom) between the car and a readily accessible point outside the hoistway that is available to emergency personnel.

The device most often installed for this purpose is a one-button or "hands-free", programmable, automatic-dialing emergency telephone meeting the requirements of the ICC/ANSI A117.1 (1998) Accessibility Standard for mounting height, operation and Braille.

Buildings with elevators traveling 60' or more and staffed onsite 24 hours per day by persons capable of taking appropriate action in the event of an elevator emergency.

A17.1, 2.27.1.1 requires a call placed from the elevator to reach a reception desk, security desk, nurses station or similar onsite location staffed 24 hours. The system must allow persons at that location to call back into the elevator and re-establish voice communication.

Buildings with elevators traveling 60' or more and not staffed onsite 24 hours per day by persons capable of taking appropriate action in the event of an elevator emergency.

A17.1, 2.27.1.1 requires the means for two-way conversation (telephone, intercom, etc.) between the elevator car and a point *inside* the building (same as above).

2.27.1.2 also requires a means of communicating with or signaling to authorized personnel *outside* the building who will take appropriate action. This means must operate 24 hours per day to prevent persons using the elevator after normal building hours from being left without communication in an emergency.

To provide for two-way conversation within the building and after-hours communication outside the building, the hands-free elevator telephone will most likely be employed. Calls will go to an answering service or if permitted, local 911 or other emergency services number. Permission must be granted by the local authorities before directing elevator telephone calls to emergency services numbers.

Unless allowed by code at the time the elevator was installed, an alarm bell on the exterior of the building is not acceptable as a means to provide communication or signaling. An alarm bell inside the building also does not meet this requirement.

Emergency Telephones in Elevators Traveling Less Than 60' and in Vertical Platform Lifts

ASME A17.1, 2.27.1.1.2 does not require elevators traveling less than 60' to be equipped with a means of two-way conversation. Although the A17.1 Handbook is not adopted as code, it is written by a member of the A17.1 standards committee as a tool for clarifying code issues. The handbook states:

"It was determined that when travel is less than 60', communications could be established from outside the hoistway without the need for a two-way communications device."

Buildings staffed 24 hours per day by persons capable of taking appropriate action in the event of an elevator emergency.

A17.1, 2.27.1.1.3 allows these elevators and lifts to be equipped with only the audible signaling device (alarm bell) required by 2.27.1.1.1. These elevators and lifts may be without a telephone or other communication device.

Buildings not staffed 24 hours per day by persons capable of taking appropriate action in the event an elevator emergency.

Similar to buildings with elevators traveling more than 60', in these buildings not staffed 24 hours per day by persons capable of taking appropriate action in the event of an elevator emergency, 2.27.1.2 requires a means of communicating with or signaling to authorized personnel *outside* the building who will take appropriate action. This means must operate when the building is normally closed to prevent persons occupying the building after normal hours from being left without communication.

Unlike elevators traveling 60' or more, elevators traveling less than 60' and lifts are not required to provide for a return call back into the elevator or lift. The telephone is permitted to use a line seizure device, allowing the elevator or lift telephone to share a line within the building.

A bell or other alarm on the exterior of the building is not acceptable as a means to provide communication or signaling unless it was code compliant at the time of installation. To provide for 24-hour communication in newer elevators, a telephone will most likely be used. Such calls will go to a 24-hour answering service, or if permitted, the local 911 or other emergency services number (approval must be granted by local authorities before programming elevator calls to local 911 or other emergency services numbers).

Existing elevators or lifts installed under previous code requirements for two-way conversation, communication or signaling when installed are now permitted to meet these current requirements.

This will remain the department's position until the department accepts a change or later interpretation to this code requirement.

Rev. 3-22-05