



## STATE OF WISCONSIN

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# Elevator Text Emergency Communication Requirements with Adoption of the 2021 International Building Code

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## Background

Effective November 1, 2025, Wisconsin Ch. SPS 361 Commercial Building Code adopted the International Building Code (IBC) – 2021 edition. The 2021 IBC requires new elevators to include a text communication system along with the previously required voice communication system (hands-free telephone) for passenger use in emergencies.

The current edition of Wisconsin Ch. SPS 318 Elevators, Escalators and Lift Devices Code adopts the ASME A17.1 – 2016, National Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators. This ASME A17.1 does not include the corresponding code requirements for text communication. Those requirements are found in the 2019 and later editions of ASME A17.1 not yet adopted in Wisconsin.

The 2021 IBC references the ASME A17.1 - 2019, however the IBC or SPS 361 does not adopt the 2019 ASME A17.1. Per Wisconsin State Stat. 101.986, only SPS 318 can adopt ASME A17.1 after review by the conveyance safety code council.

## Department Position

To provide the elevator code necessary to meet the new text communication requirement, the following parts of ASME A17.1 – 2019 will be applied to new elevators installed under the 2021 IBC.

A17.1 - 2019, 2.27.1.1.3 (c) requiring the phone pushbutton panel inside the elevator to include a message to be displayed by authorized personnel to acknowledge the emergency call from the elevator has been received by the answering service and communication has been established.

A17.1 - 2019, 2.27.1.1.3 (d), requiring the ability for a message to be displayed by authorized personnel to indicate to passengers that help is on the way. The message system must allow passengers to respond if they cannot hear or communicate verbally.

The 2021 IBC does not require a means to display video therefore ASME A17.1 – 2019, 2.27.1.1.4 (f) addressing video communication does not necessarily apply. If an elevator communication system also includes video, then this code section will apply to the video component.

## Application

The requirement for elevator text emergency communication applies where the 2021 IBC applies to the building project.

If footing and foundation plans were approved to the 2015 IBC prior to November 1, 2015, it is possible that the building plans were approved or will be approved using the 2015 IBC even if the building plans are approved after November 1, 2025.

Also, some buildings were designed using the 2021 IBC before November 1, 2025.

Finally, a petition for variance or other circumstance may affect which building code applies.

With all of the variables that can affect whether the 2015 or 2021 IBC applies to a particular elevator project, the general contractor, architect or owner will have to notify the elevator contractor of the applicable building code edition for the communication requirement. This will be particularly important if the building permit or building plan approval letter is unclear as to whether the 2015 or 2021 IBC applies code applies.