A Failure to Communicate

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

About 20 years ago, I was briefly stuck in an elevator in China, alone, in the dark. It was frightening, even to an elevator person. I found the emergency button and pushed it, trying to remain calm. That quickly left me when only a few Chinese words came through. I could not communicate! Luckily, I was on my way down to meet several men in the lobby. They were from the company responsible for the elevators in that hotel, so I was quickly rescued. But I still remember that helpless feeling when I could not make myself understood.

In the new ASME A17.1-2019/CSA B44-19: Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, the subject of communicating in emergencies is front and center, especially for those who already have difficulties communicating. This issue includes National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII) Executive Director Karen Penafiel’s Safety Upgrades, which draws attention to the key changes in the code effective June 30. One of those changes is the need for two-way video communications in an emergency. Our focus this month is Communications and how new technology available is changing how we reach riders and the maintainers.

Other articles on the topic are:
- Eyes and Ears by Dave Mann and Calvin Linde: The latest code changes mandate stricter requirements for emergency communication. Several companies are working on new solutions for those who are handicapped.
- New Skills for New Communications by Peter Rampf: The author discusses the increasing complexity of communication requirements and how this affects the adjuster.
- Reaching the Rider by Alice Gogh: Individuals expect their digital surroundings to reach out and inform them. Captivate has found that most tenants believe elevator screens help build a sense of community.
- Emergency Elevator Phones: Lessons From the Field by Chris Zarzycki and James Cateno: Sales and technical support veterans give tips on how to make working with phones simpler and more efficient.
- Elevator Phone Phreaking by Jerry J. Davis: Most phreaking or hacking has to do with computers, but elevator phones are easy to hack and listen in to private conversations. The author has several suggestions for safety.
- Video Communication per ASME A17.1 2019 by John Pierce: The author discerns the truth and solutions in the new code requirements for two-way video communication in elevators.
- Maintenance of the Future by Rob Wurth: Sensor-based maintenance involves installing a noninvasive box on the elevator. This communicates data for the maintainer and building owner.
- Door Driver With Increased Safety and Predictive Maintenance by Emre Köroğlu and Mehmet Emin Ercan: The door driver described informs personnel on the status of the doors. Therefore, maintenance personnel can perform duties from a safe point.

Another new requirement of A17.1-2019/B44-19 is a requirement for 3D door protection. Door Protection Requirement Updates by James O’Laughlin covers the new rules about door reopening devices and protection.

Our cover story this month is Elevators on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge by Shirley Zhao and Peng Jie. Dongnan Elevator Co., Ltd. designed and installed seven elevators on the bridge’s cable-supporting towers. Tilted 5.1°, the tower units were modular, designed to be dismantled and reassembled in place.

Other features are all in the U.S., including Brand-New Again by Dennis Van Milligen, thyssenkrupp’s renewal of equipment in the 100-year-old Smith Tower in Seattle. Also, Tahoe East by Eric Hausten concerns lake access provided by Marine Innovations in a South Carolina home. Making History in San Francisco by Kaija Wilkinson concerns a historic renovation in the Bay Area Rapid Transit system involving contracts for 41 escalators and 19 high-tech canopies.

These are just a few of our offerings this month. Enjoy!