

What's Riding On Elevator Safety?

Know Your Roles and Responsibilities As A Building Owner Or Property Manager

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When we think of elevator safety, many people assume it is the responsibility of the elevator manufacturer and the elevator service company to keep things running smoothly. However, in BC, the *Safety Standards Act* applies to everyone who installs, alters, maintains or operates elevating equipment. This means it's the building owner or strata manager, the elevator contractor and elevating device mechanic who all share the important role of elevator safety.

Since there's a lot riding on the reliability and effectiveness of your elevator maintenance, you need to make sure you thoroughly understand what you're responsible for.

What am I accountable for as an elevator owner?

Once an elevator is installed, tested, inspected, and put into service, the building owner or strata manager is responsible for overseeing the safe operation of the equipment. The building owner or strata manager then has legal obligations related to elevator maintenance that impact public safety and legal liability.

As such, the building owner or strata manager must ensure that all elevators are maintained and tested according to the [Safety Standards Act](#) and the Elevating Devices Safety Regulation, and any Technical Safety BC directives and safety orders.

On top of the owner's responsibility to make sure their elevator is maintained and tested according to regulatory requirements, the owner must also have a maintenance contract with a Technical Safety BC-licensed contractor. The licensed contractor acts on behalf of the owner to ensure the elevator complies with all relevant codes and regulations.

Maintenance requirements

When it comes to elevator safety, the level of use, age of the unit, and environment all must be factored in to determine the optimal maintenance schedule. However, the minimum legislated maintenance interval for elevators is once per month.

A log pertaining to all maintenance activities must be maintained on site at all times by the maintenance contractor and it must be easily accessible, legible, and signed by those completing the task. The log must contain, at a minimum, detailed records of all tests, inspections, and other maintenance duties that have been performed in the previous five years.

Each elevator must also have an up-to-date, legible electrical wiring diagram, detailing electrical protective circuits and primary directional circuits. The diagrams must be available in the machine or control room at all times.

Operating Permits

Your operating permit is the permission to operate the device and indicates the due date for required (periodic) safety tests. It is important that owners know whether or not these safety tests are included within their maintenance contract; many contracts are referred to as "oil and grease" which may encompass regular monthly maintenance but not include the required safety tests.

The elevating code outlines that elevators, dumbwaiters, lifts for persons with disabilities, and material lifts have a safety test performed at regular intervals; some are performed annually while other tests are required to be performed on a different periodic cycle.

Additionally electric elevators must also have their brakes tested annually. Escalators and moving walks must also be tested annually as outlined in the escalator and moving walk brake and start-up requirements safety order.

Review your maintenance contract to discover if the required safety tests are included within the regular maintenance plan for your equipment. Whether or not they form part of the maintenance contract, these tests are a requirement in order to operate the equipment and the owner must make arrangements to have the contractor complete them.

In the case of an incident

Owners are responsible to report various hazards and *all incidents* to Technical Safety BC. Review the requirements in the incident and hazard reporting information bulletin.

Where to seek advice and stay informed?

Technical Safety BC periodically issues safety orders to reduce the risk of personal injury or damage to property. Compliance with safety orders is mandatory and enforceable. To keep up-to-date with the regulation changes, subscribe to our news and updates on our website (www.technicalsaftybc.ca), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Your elevator contractor is your best connection to your equipment and should be the first point of contact for questions. It is important to note that while they are responsible for ensuring the safe operation of the elevator through performing maintenance tasks and testing as per Code requirements, you have ultimate responsibility and liability.

What work cannot be done by a landlord or property manager?

The following work must be done by a qualified individual with the appropriate certification and license from Technical Safety BC. Permits are also required for these types of work, though it varies who will issue them.

- Replacing light fixture or ceiling fans.
- Moving light switches or electrical outlets.
- Installing electrical wiring for renovations.
- Connecting permanently-installed electrical equipment such as a dishwasher, over-hood microwave, security camera, or heat pump.
- Installing, replacing, or servicing gas equipment or appliances such as a boiler, stove, or cooktop.
- Installing or replacing gas piping or tubing systems.
- Installing or replacing gas appliance venting.
- Installing or maintaining elevating devices.