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Memorandum

To: Elevator Owners

From: John H. Burpee, Chief Boiler, Elevator & Tramway Inspector

Date: December 8, 2008

RE: Unlicensed persons in Elevator Hoistways

This memorandum addresses some concerns raised by elevator mechanics regarding potentially unsafe conditions related to the entry of non-elevator personnel in elevator hoistways.

Elevator owners are responsible for the safety of their elevators and the hazards associated with them. An unlicensed person is permitted to enter an elevator hoistway to conduct work other than "elevator work". However, there are safety concerns while in an elevator hoistway which an unlicensed person may not be aware of.

The entry of non-elevator personnel in the hoistway creates a safety hazard due to unintended movement of the elevator car or other mechanical components. Persons that are not familiar with the hazards associated with an elevator may inadvertently cause a dangerous situation to develop.

Prior to entry by non-elevator personnel in an elevator hoistway, the elevator needs to be "made safe". Since each elevator and the hazards associated with it are unique, it is not possible to address what "made safe" means for each elevator.

It is typical for non-elevator personnel to enter an elevator hoistway:

1. to complete work which is not required to be completed by a licensed elevator mechanic; and
2. to retrieve dropped items.

An elevator needs to be “made safe” by a licensed elevator mechanic prior to entry by non-elevator personnel to perform work not required to be completed by an elevator mechanic. At a minimum, the elevator needs to have power removed so it will not respond to calls and mechanical stops/supports installed to eliminate any movement due to potential energy prior to entry to complete non-elevator work in the hoistway.

In those cases where an individual is entering the hoistway to retrieve a dropped item, it is the owner’s responsibility to ensure that only properly trained personnel complete this task and hazards associated with the elevator are eliminated and adequate protection is provided to prevent a fall into the hoistway or pit.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.