

Escalator Myths and Truths

M Riders don't have to be cautious on escalators.

T Escalators are six-ton moving machines and should be treated as such. Pay the same attention to an escalator as you would to a moving bus.

M The steps will flatten out and all the people will slide down.

T This is impossible. Each step is a full triangular structure consisting of tread and riser supported on a track and cannot flatten out.

M Escalators move too fast.

T Escalators move at only 2 times normal walking speeds. The misconception is probably due to the visual perception created when you are standing still and everything else appears to be moving.

M The steps fall into the basement and have to be restacked every morning.

T Escalator steps move on a continuous chain system. At the end they rotate under and continue on the chain and reappear at the opposite end.

M Escalators can reach out and grab you.

T No part of an escalator can do this. Riders should keep away from the sides and hold handrails. Loose clothes, untied or long shoelaces, high heels, long hair, long jewelry, etc. can get caught in an escalator.

M Escalators will stop and restart themselves.

T Escalators only stop if the STOP button is pushed, the overspeed safety switch is tripped, or an obstruction is encountered. Once stopped, escalators can only be restarted by a trained professional.

M If an escalator is standing still, it is just a set of stairs.

T Not at all! Escalator steps are not the correct height for normal walking and should not be used in that manner. The risk of tripping and falling is greatly increased.

Elevator Myths and Truths

M Elevators are held up by only one rope that can break.

T Elevators are supported by multiple steel cables. Each cable alone can support a fully loaded car.

M An overcrowded elevator will fall.

T This will not happen. An overloaded elevator will usually not move. The doors will stay open and a buzzer may ring until enough people get off the elevator to reduce weight.

M Some people believe they have been in an elevator when the elevator car fell several floors and then "caught itself."

T This cannot happen due to "safeties" on elevator cars. Elevator experts believe people may think this happened because they 1) rode an elevator going in a different direction than expected, or 2) saw the elevator floor indicator lights flash by quickly, which gave the visual impression of falling.

M The hall doors can open when an elevator is not there.

T The elevator car controls whether the hall doors open. If the car is not at the landing, the hall doors can't open because their opening can only be triggered by the arriving car engaging an unlocking device after the elevator has stopped at the landing.

M If an elevator is stuck between floors, riders are in danger of falling and should try to exit.

T Absolutely not! Leaving the car on your own could result in injury. The safest place is inside the car. Ring the alarm and/or use the telephone or intercom, and wait for help. Leave the car only with the assistance of professional rescuers.

M Pushing the hall call button repeatedly will make the elevator appear faster.

T The call is registered just once; repeated button-pushing won't bring an elevator sooner.

M Pushing the DOOR CLOSE button closes the doors faster.

T This may cause the doors to close sooner, but not at a faster speed. However, if a buzzer sounds, the doors may close sooner, so it is important to get out of the doorway as quickly as possible.



Elevator Section

We perform safety inspections and issue annual operating permits for elevators and escalators in Washington State. We also review installation applications and inspect and approve upgrades to existing elevators.

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This brochure provides a general overview on how to ride safely on elevators, escalators and moving walks. To reproduce this brochure or get more information on this subject, contact the Department of Labor and Industries or the Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation.

Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation

The resource for rider safety education



EESF Mission

To educate the public on the safe and proper use of elevators, escalators and moving walks through informational programs.

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How to ride safely on elevators, escalators and moving walks



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A safety message from the
Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation

www.eesf.org

Escalator and Moving Walk Safety Tips

When entering escalators and moving walks:

- On escalators, watch the direction of the moving steps and only enter when steps are going in the proper direction.
- Step on and off with caution. Take extra care if you are wearing bifocals.
- Hold children or small packages firmly in one hand.
- Grasp the handrail as you step promptly onto the moving step or walkway.
- Keep loose clothing clear of steps and sides.
- Don't use an inoperative escalator as a stairway.
- Don't use an escalator to transport freight.
- If you are uncomfortable boarding or riding an escalator, use the elevator instead.

When riding escalators and moving walks:

- On escalators, stand in center of step and face forward.
- On moving walks, stationary passengers should stay to the right and let those walking pass on the left.
- Keep feet away from sides.
- Keep a steady grip on the handrail.
- Don't rest your handbag or parcels on the handrail.
- Don't window-shop while riding.
- Don't lean against or over the sides.
- Never ride barefoot.
- Don't run.
- Never sit on the escalator step or moving walk.
- Parents should make sure children ride in a proper manner.

When exiting escalators and moving walks:

- Step off promptly.
- Don't hesitate. Immediately move clear of the exit area—don't stop to talk or look around. Other passengers may be behind you.



Escalator and Moving Walk Rules

- Step on and off carefully.
- People only – no strollers or carts on escalators.
- Hold the handrail.
- Take care of younger children.
- Don't touch the sides below the handrail.
- Stand facing forward.
- No loose clothing.

Elevator Safety Tips

When approaching elevators:

- Know your destination. Push the elevator call button once for the direction you want to go.
- Look or listen for the signal announcing your car's arrival.
- Stand aside for exiting passengers.
- If the arriving elevator is full, wait for the next car.
- Don't try to stop closing doors. Wait for the next elevator.
- Take the stairs if there is a fire or other situation that could lead to a disruption in electrical service.

When entering and exiting elevators:

- Enter and exit carefully.
- Once on board, quickly press the button for your floor, and move to the back of the car to make room for other passengers.
- Hold children and pets firmly.
- Stand clear of the doors – keep clothes and carry-ons away from the opening.
- Push and hold the DOOR OPEN button if doors need to be held open, or ask someone to push the button for you.
- Passengers nearest the doors should move first.

When riding elevators:

- Stand next to the elevator wall.
- Hold the handrail, if available.
- Pay attention to the floor indications, and be prepared to exit at your destination.
- If the doors do not open when the elevator stops, first push the DOOR OPEN button. If doors still don't open, ring the ALARM button, and/or use the telephone or intercom. Wait until qualified people can assist you.

Elevator Rules

- Watch your step.
- Leave closing doors alone.
- If doors don't open, ring alarm button and wait.
- Never try to leave a stalled car.
- If there is a fire in the building, use the stairs.

