



Elevator Safety Program - Technical Clarification

Equipment: Passenger/Freight Elevators & A18.1 Equipment	Topic: TC 18-09 ADA & Communication Devices	
December 21, 2018	#: 18-09	Code/Rule: ASME A17.1-2016/CSA B44-16, 2.27.1 & A18.1, 2.11.2

Issue: ADA communication devices are necessary for most conveyances where required to comply with ADA. Not all of the requirements are clear however. The following commentary will assist in providing clarification.

Background and Concerns: ADA has been in the mainstream of elevator controls and communication devices since the early 1990's. This has added some new concerns to communication devices used in elevators and on platform lifts. Typically, the purpose for an ADA compliant device is to provide a means to communicate with the recipient of the call that someone is in distress or trapped in a conveyance. Prior to ADA, this was accomplished by establishing voice communication with the caller. However, with the implementation of ADA, consideration for a caller who was hearing and/or speech impaired became necessary. Therefore, the recipient of the call needed to know the caller's location and conveyance ID number without establishing voice communication. However, the elevator codes (i.e. ASME A17.1/CSA B44, ASME A18.1, or ICC A117.1) did not clearly require "caller ID". Therefore, issues arise when a communication system is based on establishing verbal contact. The purpose of ADA is to provide accommodations for those with impairments that may prevent them from verbally communicating.

Clarification: In order for a communication system to accommodate ADA, the communication system for new or updated equipment must function as follows:

1. The person in the elevator car or on a platform lift initiates the call:
 - a. The communication device, if located in a phone cabinet, must be capable of being opened with wrist or arm pressure. Grasping of knobs or handles does not comply with ADA requirements.
 - b. The call shall be activated by pushing a button on the car-operating panel or on the platform.
2. The call must be connected to a location that is staffed 24/7.
3. The recipient of the call must be able to ascertain the address of the facility and the elevator ID without establishing voice communication (i.e. some form of caller ID or recorded message).
4. The recipient of the call needs to have instructions on how to activate the flashing light associated with the communication device in the elevator car or on the platform lift unless it is activate automatically.
 - a. The purpose of the flashing light should clearly indicate that the call was received.
5. Once the call is established, requirements in ASME A17.1/CSA B44 permit a call to be extended or disconnected (see ASME A17.1/CSA B44, 2.27.1.1.3). Note: ASME A18.1 does not have these requirements.
 - a. This is to prevent the call, once activated, from staying connected indefinitely.

Action Required: Ensure that all new communication devices function to comply with ADA and Items 1 through 5 above. Existing equipment must comply with the code under which it was installed. There is no requirement to replace conventional handsets or other older systems with an ADA compliant device unless triggered by an alteration.

Refer to ASME A17.1/CSA B44, 2.27.1; ASME A18.1, 2.11.2; and ICC A117.1, Section 407 for additional information.

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Reviewed by Technical Specialists