Subject: SAFETY ALERT: MAINTENANCE HAZARDS ON ESCALATORS
Sent to: ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS SCOPE U3, L3 AND F3

1. INFORMATION TO CONTRACTORS

Two recent accidents in Alberta, involving escalator mechanics, highlighted safety hazards to which mechanics may be exposed while working on escalators should they not take specific precautionary measures.

The Canadian Elevator Contractors Association (CECA) has taken lead in distributing to their members a related safety alert. With their permission (received from Mr. A. Brown), we are attaching the CECA publication for information to all contractors, including owner-contractors, that are registered for maintenance of escalators.

2. BACKGROUND

The following are excerpts from the Report of the Association of the Provincial Chief Elevator Inspectors to the CSA B44 Technical Committee on September 20, 1995 related to, two accidents occurred in Alberta, during the Summer of 1995.

a) Serious injury resulted when a mechanic slipped from the escalator landing plate into the step band where some steps had been removed while attempting to position the escalator using the normal start/stop station switches to check for wear. The escalator went into the “run” mode because, when he slipped, he was unable to activate the stop switch. Fortunately, his helper was working directly in front of the disconnect switch and shut the escalator off very quickly. While the mechanic was severely crushed, he survived the ordeal.

b) Death resulted when a mechanic was standing inside the step band where some steps had been removed. It appears that he attempted to position the escalator to make some checks using the normal stop/start station switches when he lost his hold on the switches. The escalator went into the “run” mode. The mechanic’s body was caught between the combplate and the landing plate and the steps running up from behind him. His body was severed just below the chest. He died almost instantly.
CECA Safety Spotlight for December

Maintenance Hazard on Escalators

The recent death of a mechanic in Alberta has highlighted a special hazard peculiar to some escalators which can be fatal. If you have mechanics maintaining escalators, please pass them this reminder.

Unlike elevators, most escalators lack "inspection" operation. To move the steps a bit on maintenance, the mechanic must turn the start key and then must manually stop the motor using the stop pushbutton. Obviously constant-pressure operation would be safer, but the reality is that many run until stopped.

The hazard is that a mechanic might find himself unable to reach the stop button. Worse, a faulty switch or a pinched wire might start the escalator running unexpectedly while the mechanic is working inside.

A Suggested Approach if Maintaining Escalators Without Inspection Operation:

☐ TRAIN mechanics to be aware of their risk from escalators with "run until stopped" operation.

☐ FIND each escalator lacking a constant-pressure "inspection" operation and Post Warnings on Controllers - "Maintenance Hazard - This escalator may start at any time and will run until stopped. Use extreme caution when moving steps."

☐ USE LOCKOUT PROCEDURE - Lock out disconnect before entering truss.

☐ USE EXTREME CARE to avoid even the possibility of personal entrapment.

☐ TWO-MAN CREWS NOTE - do not permit one person to 'jog' escalator if a second is even remotely at risk of entrapment.

PLUS - A Suggestion to Reduce the Risk:

☐ Install a maintained-contact "inspection" switch in the running contactor holding circuits!