

LIFTING MALLS

Part - V

I had ended Lifting Malls?III with a plea that the E&E industry and the mall owners need to do something to ensure that the safest mode of transport (i.e. elevators and escalator) remains such.

The following news articles compel me to write again on the subject.

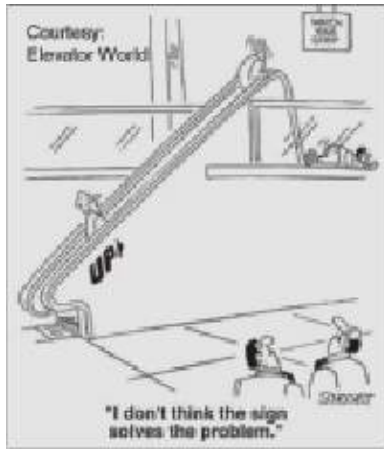
- ELENET® 419 (July 3rd, 2007) reported "BOY INJURED IN SINGAPORE ESCALATOR ACCIDENT: Channel NewsAsia recently reported that a five-year-old boy was injured while riding on an escalator in Singapore with his mother. According to the report, his sandal got caught as they rode between floors at a shopping mall.
- Times of India, Bangalore, Aahan Bhandari, 6, fell from the fourth floor of a mall in the heart of the city on Sunday and died on the way to hospital.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) images showed that

he slipped through a gap between the steel railing on the fourth floor and the escalator to the fifth floor.

- The Record (August 13, 2007).....James Foster filed a personal injury suit against Alton Square Mall in Madison County Circuit Court July 30, seeking damages for injuries he received after falling on an escalator April 20.
- Eyewitness News (August 28, 2007)..... A woman was injured in an escalator mishap at the Bowling Green subway station in Lower Manhattan Tuesday morning.
- North-West Evening Mail (September 11, 2007).... A SIX-YEAR-OLD boy was rescued by firefighters after trapping his arm in a supermarket escalator.
- Daily Yomiuri Online (October 18, 2007).....A 9-year-old boy was left injured and unconscious Tuesday afternoon after getting his neck caught between a handrail and safety barriers while using an escalator at a supermarket in Hiratsuka, Kanagawa Prefecture.





- The Virginian-Pilot (November 6, 2007)..... 14-year-old girl got her hand stuck in an escalator at Greenbrier Mall on Monday evening after she dropped her cell phone and tried to pick it up.

About 12 months ago, we had embarked on an initiative to conduct the Elevator and Escalator Safety Foundation's "Safe-T Rider" programs. This program was to be conducted free for the schools with the only commitment required being their willingness to carry on the initiative year after year. The program material was to be made available to them every year free of cost.

We initially approached 4 schools. The response that we received made us decide to give up the initiative. Despite our having backed our pitch with data, none of the principals approached bothered to respond.



One of the principals that we contacted explained that all the teachers were too busy doing project work and had no time for such things as Elevator and Escalator Safety Training. It didn't matter to her that 99% of the school's children used lifts every day. On further persuasion, she assured us that she would distribute the basic instructions among the students, but under no circumstances would she have time for the program – it is a different matter that the material never got distributed.

Considering that the safe usage of Elevators & Escalators in most buildings including malls has de-facto become the responsibility of the security agency, we talked to a security agency on including a session on safe practices in their training module. We were politely told that they had already got a clear "operating procedure" related to elevators and escalators in place and did not

require anything further. This was despite the fact that we pointed out major gaps in their operating procedure and demonstrated that the security personnel in their own office building had little knowledge of the do's and don'ts related to elevators.

The lack of awareness of the do's and don'ts related to elevators and escalators among the public, the enforcers and probably among the

building owners and even the industry is obvious. As a result of this lack of awareness, the casual approach adopted and the exponential growth in the number of malls, the clock is furiously ticking away.

About the author:

TAK Mathews is a Chartered Engineer, a member of the International Association of Elevator Engineers, of the National Association of Vertical Transportation Professionals (USA) and of the National Association of Elevator Safety Authorities International. He is the Principal Consultant at TAK Consulting (formerly TAK & Associates), India's only fully integrated and independent Vertical Transportation Consultancy.

