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Keeping Safety on the Up-and-Up

(ARA) – Every day, 25 million people ride an estimated 35,000 escalators in the United States. With so many people using this form of transportation while traveling, working or shopping, it is important to remember the do's and don'ts of safely riding an escalator.

Do ...

* Watch the direction of the moving step when entering an escalator.

* Step on and off with extra care.

* Stand in the middle of the escalator step and face forward. Avoid standing on the sides of the step where your shoes can rub against the sides of the escalator.

* Grasp the hand rail firmly as you step promptly onto the moving step. Reposition your hand slowly if the hand rail moves ahead or behind the steps.

* Keep loose clothing clear of steps and sides. Also, be aware of soft-soled and open-toed shoes or other potentially problematic footwear that could cause you to slip or fall.

* Hold children or small packages firmly in one hand. If your hands are full or if you have a wheelchair, cart or other wheeled vehicle, use elevators instead.

* Be aware of health conditions that could contribute to falls or accidents. Be extra careful if you wear prescription glasses, have an illness or take medications that affect your eyesight, mobility or balance.

Don't ...

* Lean against the sides.

* Let your feet slide off the end of the escalator. Make sure to step over the comb plate.

* Hesitate or stop to look around. Immediately move clear of the escalator exit area. Other passengers may be behind you.

* Rest your handbag or parcels on the hand rail.

* Window-shop while riding.

Escalators are among the safest forms of transportation in the world. However, they are complex machines with thousands of moving parts and occasionally injuries do occur, usually as a result of unsafe riding practices.

"Many escalator accidents can be prevented simply by being aware of your surroundings and by following simple safety rules," says Edward Donoghue, spokesperson for the National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII). "If riders adhere to the proper safety guidelines, they can ensure a safe ride each and every time they use the equipment."

The National Elevator Industry Inc. (NEII) is a leading trade association dedicated to

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educating both the general public and industry professionals about escalator and elevator safety. For more information about elevators and escalators, log onto www.neii.org.

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