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Teaching Safety is Important Year-Round

(ARA) - Escalators transport more than 245 million people in North America daily, with some 33,000 escalators filling busy shopping malls and office buildings. From big cities to suburban commercial centers, passengers busily ride up and down these mechanical wonders – often without even knowing that unsafe behavior puts them at risk of injury.

Young children riding escalators unattended. Strollers balancing on the steps. Suitcases with straps dangling. Passengers sitting on steps, running, or walking in the wrong direction. Joy-riders sitting atop or surfing handrails. These are just some of the examples of common unsafe practices on escalators.

Because riding on escalators has become so routine, we sometimes take rules and safety recommendations for granted. With shoppers filling the malls, parents, children and all passengers should be aware of safety precautions they can take on escalators to prevent injuries.

Adults can help by setting a good example.

Teach children that escalators are not toys. Explain to them that an escalator is a moving staircase. Escalators are a continuous chain of moving steps powered by a motor and are to be respected, as any large moving machinery should be. Slips, trips, and falls can occur on escalators and most can be prevented with safe riding habits.

Here are some safety tips that every escalator rider should follow:

- * Upon entering an escalator, hold children firmly by the hand, while grasping the handrail with your other hand.
- * Never take baby strollers on escalators. Take the elevator instead.
- * Wear shoes at all times and make sure shoelaces are securely tied to prevent them from becoming caught. In addition, remember to secure loose items such as toys and outerwear prior to getting on.
- * Keep children's fingers away from any spaces between the steps and the skirt of the elevator (the panels located on either side of the escalator steps).
- * Do not lean against or place handbags or packages on the handrail and never sit on the escalator steps or handrails.



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* As you exit, do so quickly to avoid blocking the path of riders behind you. If there is an emergency, push one of the "Stop" buttons located at the top or bottom landings of the escalator near the handrail or floor level.

* Lift children who are under five years old on and off an escalator. They may not yet possess the motor skills necessary to time getting on and off safely.

* Most of all, stress to children and teens that they should never play on an escalator!

By abiding by these rules, and teaching them to your children, you can reduce the risk of injury dramatically. If you take your safety seriously, others will follow your example.

For more information about escalator safety, visit the National Elevator Industry (NEII) Web site at www.neii.org, or the Elevator and Escalator Safety Foundation Web site at www.eesf.org.

Courtesy of ARA Content

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* Most of all, stress to children and teens that they should never play on an escalator!

By abiding by these rules, and teaching them to your children, you can ensure a safer ride for everyone! For more information about escalator safety, visit the National Elevator Industry (NEII) Web site at www.neii.org, or the Elevator and Escalator Safety Foundation Web site at www.eesf.org.