

Your go-to guide for elevator and escalator safety during the holidays

(BPT) - Remember the scene in Home Alone where the family is rushing through the crowded airport? Or images of teeming crowds in a shopping mall, every arm holding countless packages? Well ... it's that time of year again!

November and December are arguably the busiest months of the year for traveling and shopping. Millions of people descend on the nation's airports and shopping centers looking to create that perfect holiday memory. With all the excitement surrounding this time of year, the last thing Americans should worry about is escalator and elevator safety while navigating through the crowds. But while you may be more focused on your holiday to-do's, you need to remember some important safety tips about the elevators and escalators you are using.

Safety innovations have come a long way in the last few decades and today's elevators and escalators are safer than ever before. The National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII) is the expert in building transportation safety. NEII works to develop and promote updated safety codes, encourage the adaptation of the latest safety technologies, and ensure passengers are informed on the safest riding procedures for elevators and escalators.

However, even with all the advancements in safety technology, it's worth keeping in mind that most accidents can be easily prevented by following simple elevator and escalator safety tips. Below are key guidelines proven to keep riders safe during the holiday season and any time throughout the year:

When boarding and riding elevators:

- * Allow passengers exiting the elevator to clear before boarding
- * Watch your step - the elevator car may not be perfectly level with the floor
- * Stand clear of the doors - keep clothes and carry-ons away from the opening
- * Hold children and pets firmly
- * Leashed pets should be on the same side of the door as the passenger to prevent the door from closing on the leash
- * Passengers nearest to the doors should enter first when the car arrives
- * Push and hold the "door open" button if doors need to be held open, or ask someone to push the button for you
- * Never try to stop a closing door, wait for the next car
- * Once on board, quickly press the button for your floor and move to the back of the car to make room for other passengers
- * Hold the rail or stand against the wall, if available
- * Pay attention to the floor indications and announcements when provided
- * If the doors do not open when the elevator stops, push the "door open" button

If there is ever an emergency, remember that all elevators have several safety devices, one of which is brakes that will stop the car if it is not operating properly. If the elevator should ever stop between floors, do not panic. Follow these guidelines:

- * If the elevator should ever stop between floors, do not panic, there is plenty of air in the elevator
- * Never climb out of a stalled elevator
- * Use the "alarm" or "help" button, the telephone or the intercom to call for assistance
- * Above all, wait for qualified help to arrive and never try to leave an elevator that has not stopped normally
- * Emergency lighting will come on in the event of a power failure

When entering escalators:

- * Watch the direction of the moving step and step on and off with extra care
- * Hold children firmly with one arm or hold child's free hand
- * Hold small packages firmly in one hand, but always leave one hand available to hold the handrail
- * Grasp the handle as you step onto the moving step
- * Do not step onto an escalator going in the opposite direction
- * Do not take wheelchairs, electric scooters, strollers, hand carts, luggage carts or similar items on the escalator

When riding and exiting escalators:

- * Keep loose clothing clear of steps and sides
- * Wear closed-toed and hard-soled shoes, and avoid wearing footwear made of soft-resin or other rubbery materials
- * Stand clear and keep feet clear of the sides of the escalator
- * Face forward and keep firm grip on the handrail
- * Reposition your hand slowly if the handrail moves ahead or behind the steps
- * Don't climb onto or ride the handrail
- * Do not let children sit on steps or stand too close to sides
- * Don't hesitate and step off promptly
- * Make sure to step over the comb fingers; don't let your feet slide off the end of the escalator
- * Immediately move clear of the escalator exit area; don't stop to talk or look around since other passengers may be behind you

Always remember, if there is an emergency, simply push one of the "stop" buttons located at the top or bottom landings of the escalator near the handrail or floor level. For more detailed information about elevator and escalator safety, visit the NEII website at www.neii.org.

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When using elevators:

- * Watch your step - the elevator car may not be perfectly level with the floor.
- * Stand clear of the doors - keep clothes and carry-ons away from the opening.
- * Hold children and pets firmly.
- * Exit immediately at your floor. Do not wait for others behind you.
- * Do not push the people in front of you when exiting.

When riding and exiting escalators:

- * Keep loose clothing clear of steps and stand clear of the sides of the escalator.
- * Wear closed-toed and hard-soled shoes, and avoid wearing footwear made of soft-resin or other rubbery materials.
- * Face forward and hold handrail for the entire ride.
- * Don't rest any items or parcels on the handrail or lean against the sides.

For more detailed information about elevator and escalator safety, visit the NEII website at www.neii.org.