

Notice/Reminder – Elevator Pit and Hoistway Access is Limited to Authorized Individuals

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (“OSFM”) provides the following notice/reminder that only elevator personnel licensed by the State of Illinois (or those accompanied by licensed and trained elevator personnel) may access elevator pits and hoistways. Elevator pits, hoistways, and the top of elevator cars are inherently dangerous areas that may expose individuals to hazards such as falling, shearing, crushing, and electrical shock.

It has come to the OSFM’s attention that certain smoke and heat detector companies may have been accessing elevator pits and hoistways to conduct tests on smoke and heat detectors without having licensed elevator personnel present. Not only is this an unsafe practice that places unlicensed personnel at risk, it also runs counter to Illinois statutes and regulations.

Illinois law mandates that the Elevator Safety Review Board (the “Board”) adopt regulations for the administration and enforcement of the Elevator Safety and Regulation Act (the “Act”) [225 ILCS 312/35]. The Act further provides that the Board adopt or amend and adopt various elevator safety standards, including the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (“ASME”) A17.1 – Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators (the “Code”). Accordingly, the Board has – via regulation – adopted ASME A17.1–2013 [41 Ill. Adm. Code 1000.60(a)(1)(A)].

The Code defines “elevator personnel” as individuals who have been trained in the construction, maintenance, repair, inspection, or testing of elevator equipment [ASME A17.1–2013 Requirement 1.3]. The Code makes clear that elevator pits and hoistways should only be accessible to licensed elevator personnel. Namely, the Code states that elevator pits shall be accessible only to elevator personnel [ASME A17.1–2013 Requirement 2.2.4.4], top-of-car inspection operation shall be used only by elevator personnel [ASME A17.1–2013 Requirement 2.26.1.4.1(e) and 2.26.1.4.2], and keys to pit access doors and hoistway access doors are classified as Security Group 1 that are restricted to use by elevator personnel [ASME A17.1–2013 Requirement 8.1.2(a) and 8.1.2(c)].

Consequently, in light of the existing statutory and regulatory requirements, and for the safety concerns identified above, the OSFM reminds all involved parties that only elevator personnel licensed by the State of Illinois (or those accompanied by licensed and trained elevator personnel) are permitted to access elevator pits and hoistways. Elevator pits and hoistways should not be accessed without the presence of a person licensed as elevator personnel.