

The new code adoption effectively changes the implementation of new equipment. So, if a condo corporation considers upgrades, these changes could influence the cost.



Elevator Codes are Changing

Is Your Property Ready?

Property Managers are not typically mindful of elevator codes and developments. However, incoming amendments to jurisdictionally adopted elevator codes (related to elevator safety and emergency features) will affect capital expenditure planning (CapEx) whether these are initially considered or not.

The Technical Safety Standards Association (TSSA) will be adopting the ASME A17.1/B44-2019 code standards. Some major changes include systematic improvements to elevator door protection and emergency communication protocols. Matthew Sayewich, Chief Financial Officer with March Elevator, elaborates: “Every elevator has a sensor that detects if someone is standing in between the doors, so they do not close on them. Typically, these sensors cover the width of the door frame. The new code calls for 3D door protection, which means wider optical protection for those standing in front of the doors.”

Moving into further detail, Sayewich poses another example, “Think of those automatic doors at a mall; much like they’re programmed to slide open upon approach, building elevators will require this same type of coverage to ensure elevator doors do not close as one advances towards it.”

The second code change pertains to the addition of one-way video, two-way messaging emergency communication technology. Traditionally, elevators have been equipped with a phone for use by riders in any emergency. This new proto-



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col will require elevators to better support passengers with hearing impairments by mandating a form of one-way visual and two-way messaging communication. Ultimately the objective is to provide a more comprehensive ADA (*Americans with Disabilities Act*) compliance.

“This mandate offers well-rounded support to accommodate all; thus including those who may not be able to use an audible phone,” Sayewich explains. “In addition to existing two-way audio, there will be a closed-loop video and screen to display questions from an attendant. This will allow passengers to answer with either buttons or touch screen commands.”

Accommodating this visual communication may require additional considerations to take place. Supporting video communications, for example, may require buildings to develop an internal communications network that requires additional staff to accommodate technological upgrades. Alternatively, these monitoring requirements could be outsourced to an elevator contractor.

“That is where March Elevator, for example, could be monitoring at the other end of the phone or screen,” says Sayewich. “This would allow direct communication whenever someone requires assistance in one of our elevators, so we can swiftly and promptly address the situation.”

These changes bring heightened safety standards and reliability to elevator operations. Similarly, this will require upgrades to existing elevators and further network support to conclude successful execution.

Why This Matters to Property Stakeholders

Property owners and managers generally do not have the bandwidth to familiarize themselves with new and changing elevator codes. Many entrust their elevator contractors or consulting engineers with the task of staying current. However, it is best practice for property stakeholders to be aware of all incoming changes, as these may alter budgeting plans and forecasts.

“The new code adoption effectively changes the implementation of new

equipment. So, if a condo corporation considers upgrades, these changes could influence the cost,” Sayewich suggests. “For example, if a quote for elevator work is issued in 2021, but property managers have decided to hold off on pursuing the contract for a year, the original quote may not be accurate anymore.”

As such, property owners ought to engage their elevator contractors or consultants presently to understand how these code changes will influence future CapEx planning.

Need a Lift?

Adapting to ever-evolving building codes takes time. While new safety standards surrounding 3D door protection and video communications are not currently in effect, there is benefit in presently recognizing how new codes affect project timelines, costs, and the impact on those that may occupy the building.

Ultimately, these changes significantly upgrade elevator safety. However, they will require additional work. Even if property stakeholders are not currently planning any repairs or upgrades, it is in their best interest to keep up-to-date with new and evolving changes to elevator codes and plan accordingly. ■

March Elevator Ltd. is a Toronto-based company specializing in reliable elevator and lift maintenance and installation services. Visit them at www.march-elevator.ca.

