

Log of Meeting

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Subject: Escalator safety

Date of Meeting: May 14, 1996 Place: CPSC Headquarters
Bethesda, MD

Log Entry Source: Roy W. Deppa, ESME *[Handwritten initials]*

Date of Entry: May 22, 1996

Commission Attendees: See Attendance List

Non-Commission Attendees: See Attendance List

Summary of Meeting:

The meeting was opened by Mr. Medford, who made introductions and described the purpose as an information-gathering opportunity for CPSC staff. Mr. Deppa distributed copies of an injury data analysis memorandum by Kim Long, EHHA, followed by a brief description of the information contained in the memo.

The meeting was conducted as an informal discussion, concentrating on details of escalator design and operation, some of the safety devices available for retrofit, operational experiences with escalators, the history and details of the ASME/ANSI A17.1 voluntary standard, and related issues. The major part of the information concerning industry practices and the voluntary standard was provided by Mr. Seymour, a private consultant and Chairman of the A17.1 committee.

The following partial list of issues was noted:

1. The industry appears to take the position that entrapment is primarily a maintenance issue. Within the A17 committee, a Task Group has recently been established to consider maintenance issues. Among other actions, this Task Group will attempt to harmonize United States requirements with existing Canadian requirements. The results of the Task Group are expected within six months to one year from the present time.
2. Frictional characteristics of the sidewall are considered a key element in step/sidewall injuries, and thus friction-reducing materials are required by the code. Apparently for older units, this typically consists of silicone spray applied to the sidewalls. There is no performance specification or definition of the low friction materials. The requirement was added to the code in 1983. There has apparently been no attempt to measure the effectiveness of this requirement in reducing injuries.

Several attendees commented that for low friction material that has to be continuously re-applied, the longevity of the low

friction surface is dependent upon the quality of the product itself, the severity of use, and how often the escalator is inspected. Further, there is no recommended quality of the product or inspection interval. Mr. Winn said that his people were inspecting their escalators every two weeks, others said inspections could go as long as twice a year.

3. The ASME A17 "code" is also an ANSI voluntary standard, which is enforced when adopted or recognized by local authorities. The requirements for certification of local inspectors apparently varies widely. There were comments from several people to the effect that it is very difficult to inspect units for compliance to some of the details of the code, and further that it is very difficult to have a whole escalator meet the sidewall and combplate spacing requirements as they vary so greatly during operation, in part due to loading patterns.

4. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has tested five different sidewall safety devices over the past two years, and although it has found that all can be effective in providing safety, they were also evaluated for cost, installation time, wearability, potential damage to the unit, and maintenance cost. As a result, the Kleaneze Sealtech brush strips will be installed on all units. During this discussion, Mr. Alasio noted that with the brush strips installed on over 4,000 units worldwide, there have been no reported entrapments on any of those units. Mr. White noted that of all the units with his Safety Sideplates installed, there has been one reported case, which is currently in litigation.

5. The code currently has a provision stating that the ballustrade must be smooth, leading to some differences in interpretation concerning the installation of brush strips. This matter is currently being considered by the code committee.

6. Mr. White noted that although the code currently states that up to a 3/16-inch maximum clearance may be maintained at each side of the step, when the step shifts laterally, a space of up to 3/8-inch may occur.

7. Mr. Lapierre briefly described a safety program developed by the Safety Foundation that is targeted toward second-grade students in November of each year. The program has been in place for four years, and is expected to have reached one million children by 2000.

8. Mr. Seymour stated that the A17 committee is open to CPSC participation.

9. Mr. Donoghue read a statement on behalf of NEI stating that while they are willing to work with any organization on safety issues, it is NEI's position that escalators are integral parts of buildings and are therefore industrial equipment. He further encouraged CPSC to work with the A17 committee.

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Sign-in Sheet

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