Elevator Emergencies

Elevator incidents can range from routine stalled-car calls to serious, life-threatening emergencies involving fire, injury, entrapment, or hazardous conditions. This course prepares telecommunicators to recognize elevator-related hazards, understand basic elevator components and safety features, gather critical information from callers, determine appropriate response needs, and provide safe instructions to callers located both inside and outside an elevator. Learners also examine strategies for managing callers experiencing anxiety or panic during an elevator incident.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the basic components of an elevator and its safety features.
2. Identify different types of elevators and describe their purposes.
3. Describe conditions that constitute an elevator emergency.
4. Gather critical information needed to assess an elevator incident and determine its urgency.
5. Discuss the types of emergency response that elevator incidents may require.
6. Provide appropriate safety instructions to callers inside and outside an elevator.
7. Apply communication strategies to help manage callers experiencing anxiety or panic.

Module 1: What is an Elevator?

This module introduces the basic construction and operation of elevators. Learners examine the major components that allow an elevator to move safely between floors, including the elevator car and shaft, motor and sheave, control unit, counterweight, and guide rails. The module also introduces common emergency safety functions and reviews several types of elevators that telecommunicators may encounter during an emergency.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define an elevator and describe its basic operating purpose.
2. Identify the major components of a modern elevator and explain their functions.
3. Describe common elevator emergency safety features, including the emergency stop, alarm, and telephone.
4. Explain how elevator emergency communication systems may connect occupants with building personnel, monitoring services, or 911.
5. Differentiate among common elevator types based on their intended use.

Content/Activities

- Elevator definition and basic operation
- Key elevator components
- Elevator safety and emergency features
- Emergency alarms and communication systems
- Types of elevators and lifts
- Interactive elevator types review

Module 2: Types of Elevator Emergencies

This module examines elevator incidents ranging from routine stalls to life-threatening emergencies. Learners review common causes of stalled elevators and identify circumstances that increase the urgency of a response, such as fire, illness, injury, or panic. The module also addresses hazards that can result in severe injury or death during elevator incidents.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Describe common causes and characteristics of a stalled elevator.
2. Distinguish between a routine stalled-elevator incident and a life-threatening elevator emergency.
3. Identify conditions that increase the urgency of an elevator incident.
4. Describe common causes of serious injury or death involving elevators and elevator shafts.
5. Recognize risks to occupants, maintenance personnel, rescuers, and others working around elevator systems.

Content/Activities

- Stalled elevators
- Power failure, poor maintenance, overcrowding, and unsafe occupant behavior
- Fire or smoke involving an elevator or shaft
- Sick or injured occupants
- Panic and escalating occupant behavior
- Hazards to elevator workers and rescuers
- Entrapment between the elevator and shaft
- Falls into elevator shafts
- Entrapment in operating equipment
- Injuries caused by unexpected elevator movement

Module 3: Information Gathering

This module focuses on the information telecommunicators need to collect when handling an elevator incident. Because calls can range from uncomplicated stalls to serious entrapments, accurate information gathering is essential for establishing urgency, selecting the appropriate response, and preparing responders for conditions at the scene.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Determine how the duration of an elevator entrapment can affect call urgency.
2. Identify occupant conditions, including phobias, medical needs, injuries, or other vulnerabilities that may influence the response.
3. Gather essential information about the number of occupants and the elevator car's location.
4. Identify hazardous materials, active rescue attempts, and other scene conditions that may increase risk.
5. Determine which emergency resources may be appropriate based on the information collected.

Content/Activities

- Duration of entrapment
- Anxiety, panic, and phobias
- Number and condition of occupants
- Elevator location and overloading
- Injuries and special medical needs
- Hazardous materials and fire/smoke conditions
- Rescue attempts and associated risks
- Elevator alarm and mechanic notification
- Determining appropriate emergency response
- Role of the elevator mechanic in rescue operations

Module 4: Advising Callers

This module addresses the instructions telecommunicators should provide during elevator incidents. Learners examine the differences between advising callers trapped inside an elevator and callers reporting an incident from outside the elevator. Particular attention is given to preventing unsafe self-rescue attempts and helping panicked callers remain focused and calm.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Provide safe instructions to occupants trapped inside an elevator.
2. Explain why callers should not force elevator doors or attempt to leave an elevator that is not safely aligned with a landing.
3. Provide appropriate instructions to callers located outside a stalled elevator.
4. Recognize common signs and symptoms of a panic attack.
5. Apply repetitive persistence and the Three Cs to help de-escalate a panicked caller.

Content/Activities

- Advising callers inside and outside the elevator
- Elevator safety and self-rescue precautions
- Recognizing and managing panic
- Repetitive Persistence and calming techniques
- The Three Cs: Courteous, Confidence, and Concern
- 911 call audio and transcript activity
- Communicating with trapped occupants
- Preparing for responder access
- Contacting building management and elevator personnel
- Avoiding unsafe elevator or building system actions

Module 5: Knowledge Check

This module gives learners an opportunity to apply the principles discussed throughout the course to realistic elevator-emergency situations. Scenario-based questions assess the learner's ability to recognize hazards, establish call urgency, determine appropriate responses, and provide safe caller instructions.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply elevator emergency safety principles to scenario-based situations.
2. Differentiate life-threatening elevator emergencies from routine stalled-elevator incidents.
3. Select appropriate instructions for callers trapped inside or located outside an elevator.
4. Identify conditions requiring additional or specialized emergency response resources.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the major concepts presented throughout the course.

Content/Activities

- Knowledge Check
- Scenario involving a partially open elevator and misaligned landing
- Identification of life-threatening elevator emergencies
- Entrapment and injury scenarios
- Phobia and panic considerations
- Information-gathering scenarios
- Response-selection questions
- Caller-instruction scenarios

Module 6: Conclusion

This module reinforces the telecommunicator's role in managing elevator-related calls safely and effectively. Learners review the importance of recognizing potential hazards, obtaining accurate information, dispatching appropriate resources, discouraging unsafe rescue attempts, and providing calm, clear instructions to callers until responders arrive.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Summarize the major hazards associated with elevator incidents.
2. Explain the telecommunicator's role in gathering information and determining the urgency of an elevator call.
3. Identify appropriate response resources for common elevator emergencies.
4. Reinforce safe caller instructions that reduce the risk of additional injury.
5. Apply the key principles of elevator emergency call handling to future incidents.

Content/Activities

- Review of elevator components and safety functions
- Review of elevator types and emergency conditions
- Review of critical information-gathering requirements
- Review of appropriate emergency response resources
- Review of caller safety instructions
- Review of panic-management and communication techniques
- Course conclusion

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn a certificate and continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browse