

	TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE Department Best Practices	B303
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	Effective: 2/13/2018 Rescinds: Reference: AFD 303.1 Application: Shift Personnel
Use of Elevators		

I. Purpose

To establish a policy for the use of elevators during firefighting operations.

II. Background

Under fire conditions, elevators can become erratic and dangerous. They are subject to serious malfunction from the effects of heat, smoke and moisture on the drive and control mechanisms. Yet, if their safe use can be established, they are invaluable for quickly getting firefighters and equipment to the floors just below the fire. Firefighters’ energy reserves can then be used for fighting the fire rather than expended reaching the fire.

All elevators installed in recent years have been required to include safety features such as Emergency Service and Firefighter Controls. In addition, high-rise buildings taller than 120 feet built according to the 2009 or newer code must have a Fire Service Access Elevator. These elevators are specifically designed for use by firefighters during high-rise fire operations.

This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on Use of Elevators. It has been adopted by Manchaca Fire Rescue as an Auto Aid partner to maximize standardization between partner agencies. Variations and additions to the language from the parent AFD document will be signified by text in italics. Generic changes that do not affect content such as formatting and changing “AFD” to “MFR” will not be noted.

III. Policy

- A. **Implementation.** Elevators should be used if, and only if, their safety can be established.
- B. **Evaluation of elevators.** The ability to safely use the elevators in a high-rise building should be evaluated initially by the officer in charge of Fire Attack 1 and/or the Inside Truck and then monitored continuously afterward by the Lobby Control Officer.

IV. Best Practices

- A. **Use of elevators.** The decision of whether or not to use the elevators *in a high rise building* should be made based on the following considerations:
1. **Fire Service Access Elevator.** The availability of a Fire Service Access Elevator.
 2. **Split bank elevators.** The availability of split-bank elevators and/or remotely located elevators.
 3. **Reported fire floor.** The floor of the reported fire (for eight floors or lower, it may be just as fast to use the stairs).
 4. **Firefighter controls.** Presence of Firefighter Controls.
 5. **Clear hoist way.** Signs of fire, smoke or water in the elevator hoist way and/or elevator controls.
- B. **Safety of the elevator.** The following steps should be conducted to determine the safety of an elevator:
1. **Signs of fire.** Look for exterior visible signs of fire upon arrival.
 2. **Elevators systems involved.** Consider the reported location of the fire. Do not consider elevators safe for use if the elevator penthouse or major controls are suspected to be involved in fire.
 3. **Witness information.** Attempt to get first-hand information from occupants, security or maintenance personnel.
 4. **Elevator recall.** Obtain key for the Firefighter Control feature from the fire control room and recall the elevator(s) to the lobby. Also, if available, obtain a firefighter phone hand set to use for communication from within the elevator in case portable radio transmission is not possible.
 5. **Inspecting hoist way.** Open the hoist way door and, with the emergency stop button activated and using a handlight, visually check the hoist way for fire, smoke or water. If any is present, the elevator shall not be used.
 6. **Test elevator function.** Enter elevator and ensure that the Firefighter Controls work properly. This can be accomplished by ascending a couple of floors and making sure that the elevator stops at the correct floor and that the elevator doors open and shut correctly. The call cancel feature may also be tested for proper operation.
 7. **Communicate elevator use.** Report the decision of whether or not to use the elevators to Command by radio.
 8. **Two floors below.** Take the elevator to the second floor below the reported fire floor.

9. **Investigate fire floor.** Take the stairs up to the fire floor and upon arrival at the fire floor, report conditions in the elevator lobby to Command to determine continued use of the elevator.

C. **Elevator use absolutes.** These seven rules regarding elevator safety shall be followed at all times when operating an elevator during firefighting operations:

1. NEVER use an elevator unless it is under Firefighter Control.
2. NEVER take an elevator to the fire floor.
3. NEVER pass the fire floor in an elevator.
4. NEVER use an elevator in a multiple elevator hoist way unless all cars are under Firefighter Control.
5. NEVER overcrowd elevators--leave room to force your way out if necessary.
6. ALWAYS activate the emergency stop button before escaping a stalled elevator.
7. ALWAYS carry forcible entry tools when using elevators.