



**Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association  
Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association  
Central Texas Regional Procedures**



**#08**

**REGIONAL USE OF ELEVATORS  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

**Adopted  
December 6, 2023**

## **PURPOSE**

On February 1, 2020 an Automatic Aid Agreement commenced between members of the Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association (CAFCA) and the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFA). Central Texas Regional Procedure #8 Use of Elevators SOG is a cooperative effort between all members to ensure personnel and resources operate in a like manner across Williamson and Travis Counties. This policy is for the use of elevators during fire fighting operations.

## **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.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

- A. Elevators should be used if, and only if, their safety can be established.
- B. 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.

## **PROCEDURE**

- A. The decision of whether or not to use the elevators should be made based on the following considerations:
  - 1. The availability of a Fire Service Access Elevator.
  - 2. The availability of split-bank elevators and/or remotely located elevators.
  - 3. The floor of the reported fire (for eight floors or lower, it may be just as fast to use the stairs).
  - 4. Presence of Firefighter Controls.
  - 5. Signs of fire, smoke or water in the elevator hoist way and/or elevator controls.
- B. The following steps should be conducted to determine the safety of an elevator:
  - 1. Look for exterior visible signs of fire upon arrival.

2. 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. Attempt to get first-hand information from occupants, security or maintenance personnel.
  4. 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. 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. 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. Report the decision of whether or not to use the elevators to Command by radio.
  8. Take the elevator to the second floor below the reported fire floor.
  9. 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. These seven rules regarding elevator safety shall be followed at all times when operating an elevator during fire fighting 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 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.