

# Lift No Toy

For most people residing in urban cities, lifts have become an integral part of daily life. Yet, the lift would be a perfect analogy for highlighting Maslow's "Health & Hygiene Theory. Normally the lift is noticed by its absence rather than by its presence; and in an even worse scenario after an unsavory incident.

This "take it for granted" is triggered by the simplicity involved in using a lift and the fact that the critical parts of the lift are well hidden from the user's access. This attitude converts the world's safest mode of transport into the probable hazard. When children are the victims, the tragedy assumes different proportions.

Children tend to be fascinated by high-tech elevators looking or glass elevators. While lifts are easy to use and can normally not lead to incidents, the lift is definitely not a toy. The normally safe components can get tested by children's innocence and sometimes so not innocent activities.

Door detectors: The mechanical and light detectors are safety devices meant to prevent the doors from closing in on something that might come in between the doors. These are safety devices to take care of an eventuality and not to be tested by users. Users tend to use this to hold the elevator. Children like to play "catch me if you can" with these doors.

Landing doors: In cities with limited playing area, the lift lobby becomes the favourite cricket pitch and even as a football ground. The lift doors then double up as the wicket or the goal. And if that is not forceful enough, lift lobbies tend to be ideal places for horseplay. As per codes the visible door panels and the invisible components that hold the panels in place are designed to withstand a thrust of up to 345N applied normally. The rider here is "applied normally", which with age and improper maintenance could deteriorate. Even when a new door, it is not up to kids to test that the code has been complied with. In this situation, the impact of a football or a person crashing into a door can be disastrous.

Elevator Car: The elevator car panels often double up as a graffiti board. This however causes no real problem other than embarrassment of sorts. The problem starts when the car is used as a trampoline or even worse when the car panels become tested as stress relievers. The same rule that applies to the door panels apply to the car as well.

Elevator control panels: The elevator control panels and buttons are the few controls within the user's reach. Since they are normally of lower voltage, and assuming that the grounding (earthing) is proper, the chances of serious injury are low. However, the damaged buttons causes inconvenience to other users.

Manual collapsible gates: Collapsible gates expose the lift shaft to the outside world. There have been instances where the traveling cables have been hooked out from inside the shaft and tied up, leading to serious damage when the lift moves.

Partial knowledge and curiosity: The partial awareness children gain through observing lift technicians or the security guards doing something on the lift combined with curiosity (or bravado) is the worst combination and sure recipe for disaster.

## The solution

The solution lies in treating the lift with respect. While adequate safeties have been built into the system, mechanical and electronic components can fail and so can the human responsible for maintaining the equipment.

With the innovative and curious mindset of the new generation, there are many other possibilities that will crop up. In fact some new tricks and adventure games, have already caught on in other countries with very dangerous consequences.

It is up to parents and elders along with the industry to take the lead in establishing that the lift is not a toy, and with proper maintenance, the safest mode of transport, remains as such.

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