

Elevator Emergency Communication

ASME A17.1-2019 / 2022 (CSA B44:19 / B44:22) • Section 2.27.1.1

Every item below is about the **phone in the car** and the system behind it. Walk this list with your elevator contractor, your IT group and your state or city elevator authority before you accept the job. If a line can't be checked, it's an open compliance item and a life-safety gap.

1. BASELINE, EVERY PASSENGER CAR 2.27.1.1.1 to .3

- ☐ Two-way voice between the car and a location **staffed by authorized personnel** who can act: security desk, monitoring center or 9-1-1.
- ☐ Hands-free in the car. **No handset.**
- ☐ One push button, permanently marked with the **PHONE** symbol, in or next to the car panel. Pressing it starts the call; the passenger dials nothing.
- ☐ Never answered by an **automated attendant**. A person picks up.
- ☐ On demand, the receiver can get the **building location and car number**.
- ☐ The passenger can't end the call. Only the receiver hangs up, or a timed cut-off with a 3-minute voice warning the receiver can extend.
- ☐ Not acknowledged in **45 seconds**? The call auto-forwards to a second on- or off-site location.

2. ADDED IN 2019, EVERY CAR 2.27.1.1.3

- ☐ A message on the car panel confirming the call is connected.
- ☐ **Two-way messaging** on the panel so the receiver can reach, and get answers from, a passenger who **cannot speak or hear**.
- ☐ A **"help is on the way"** message the receiver can push to the car.
- ☐ **Video** that lets the receiver see a passenger at **any location on the car floor**, including someone on the ground.

Read this twice. Text and video are not a 60 ft (18 m) rule. They apply to every new passenger elevator, and to alterations as the AHJ applies them, wherever the 2019 edition or later is in force: a 3-story building the same as a 30-story one. The most common miss on a modernization.

3. RISE OF 60 FT (18 M) OR MORE 2.27.1.1.4

- ☐ A **second voice means inside the building**, at the designated level, for emergency personnel. In addition to the car phone.
- ☐ Responders reach **each car individually**, with no delay and no action by the passenger. It **overrides** outside calls.
- ☐ It identifies the building and car; only the responder (or the timed cut-off) ends the call.
- ☐ A **"help is on site"** message displays in the car.
- ☐ Text and video are **not** required at this station by the base code (they are car-side, Section 2). Some cities add them; New York City does.

4. POWER AND SELF-TESTING 2.27.1.1.5 and .6

- ☐ **4 hours** of standby power for the communication means; **1 hour** for the audible signal.
- ☐ The system **verifies its own line automatically**, continuously or at least daily, without a live call. VoIP and network paths need the equivalent check.
- ☐ A failed check lights **"ELEVATOR COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE"** and sounds an alarm at the designated level, by the FIRE RECALL switch, until the line is back.
- ☐ Backup covers the whole path (switches, PoE, gateway) and a failed test reaches a **named person**. **PRACTICE, NOT CODE**. Put both in writing.

5. BEYOND THE CODE: WHAT BUYERS ASK FOR practice

- ☐ Communication holds up through a power or network failure, with a documented failover path.
- ☐ Live video the responder watches in real time, not a still image on request.
- ☐ Remote monitoring and diagnostics so faults surface on their own.
- ☐ Encryption on the connection (TLS and SRTP on IP systems). Analog lines can't do this.
- ☐ **No dependence on a copper POTS line**. Carriers are retiring copper; the phone has to survive that.
- ☐ The device meets your facility IT, privacy and cybersecurity policy, and someone owns it.

Government, transit, healthcare and critical-infrastructure buildings often fall under NIST 800-53, FedRAMP, CJIS, HIPAA or state privacy law. Call audio and video are personal information. An unmanaged cloud or cellular device in a hoistway can fail that review even when it passes code.

6. WHICH EDITION DOES MY STATE ENFORCE?

ASME A17.1 is adopted state by state, and sometimes city by city, each on its own schedule. Talk-and-text (Sections 2 and 3) applies once your jurisdiction adopts **A17.1-2019 or later** without excluding the clause.

- ☐ Ask the AHJ which **edition** is in force and whether any section of 2.27.1.1 is **excluded or deferred**.
- ☐ Ask whether the requirement is triggered by your **alteration**, not only by new installations (Section 8.7 and the AHJ decide).
- ☐ Ask about **local additions**. New York City (Appendix K) also requires text and video at the in-building station. Some states defer parts: Alabama postponed enforcing the video requirement to January 1, 2027.
- ☐ Get the answer **in writing** and keep it with the elevator file for the inspector.

7. ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN OFF

- ▶ **Who picks up at 2 a.m.?** Get the primary receiver and the failover, in writing.
- ▶ **How does it connect?** POTS, cellular or IP/SIP. Analog can't carry text or video. Cellular is only as good as signal in the shaft.
- ▶ **Where does the video land**, who may watch it, and where is it stored?
- ▶ **Does IT manage this device**, or is it on the network with no owner?
- ▶ **Who tests it, how often**, and where do I see the record for the inspector?

30^{sec}
PATH CHECK
INTERVAL

Line verification is not a monthly walk-around.

2.27.1.1.6 expects the system to check its own path, not a person with a clipboard riding 24 cars. **ECPS, Emergency Call Path Supervision from Lift Communications**, polls every elevator phone as often as every 30 seconds, with no simulated call, and trips the annunciator at the designated level when a path drops. You know in a minute, not at the next inspection.


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