

Title: Safety of public amenities a must

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## Safety of public amenities a must

**CHAIRMAN** of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Malaysia Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye sheds some light on safety regulations in public places.

**Q: What can be done to prevent accidents from recurring?**

**A:** In the case of the death of 6-year-old Nurhayada Sofia, there are some suggestions to consider to ensure safety on an escalator. A parent or guardian should always hold their children's hands and not allow them to sit or play on the escalator steps.

Parents and children must always look ahead, stand within the yellow border and hold the handrail. Never lean on the side rails and avoid placing bags or packages on the handrails. Most accidents involving escalators occur because of public ignorance of such safety measures.

**Q: Are our safety standards in public places adequate?**

**A:** Safety standards for public places are inadequate and require enhancement. Legislation, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 and Uniform Building By-Law 1984 are applicable and enforceable today.

In OSHA 1994, Section 15 lays out the responsibilities of employers for the safety, health and welfare of all their employees at the workplace, as well as ensuring the work area is safe and without health risks. UBBL 1984 addresses safety standards of buildings, including light and ventilation, structural requirements, fire detection and fire fighting access.

**Q: Some believe escalator deaths can be avoided with the use of safety nets. Are safety nets supposed to be part of reg-**

**ulations in public buildings?**

**A:** Installation of safety nets is not part of safety standards for escalators in public buildings. Provision on safety nets are mentioned in Section 55-57 under the Factory and Machinery (Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction) (Safety) Regulations, which is mainly for building construction work.

**Q: There has been more than one fatality involving faulty lifts. Whose responsibility is it and what should the authorities be doing?**

**A:** Under Section 31 (1) of the Factories and Machinery (Electric Passenger and Good Lift) Regulations, it is the responsibility of the lift and escalator owner (for condominiums, this would be the joint management body) to ensure that lifts

and escalators are maintained. Other than maintenance, every lift should be certified as fit to use by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH). The Factories and Machinery (Notification, Certificate of Fitness and Inspection) Regulations require inspections by a DOSH inspector and a Certificate of Fitness will be valid for 15 months.

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