



## **NEII History**

From its inception a century ago, the National Elevator Industry Inc., (NEII®) has represented its members in codes and standards and labor relations across the scope of the building transportation industry. Throughout the years, NEII has gone through significant changes in organization.

The initial recorded meeting between elevator contractors occurred on May 25, 1914 at the Iroquois Hotel in Buffalo, New York. A sub-committee was appointed to prepare the constitution and by-laws for the organization which would be called the Elevator Manufacturers' Association (EMA).

The first convention of EMA was held October 21, through 23, 1914 at the Gibson House, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The first recorded contract between EMA and the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) occurred at the Waldorf Astoria, New York City on April 14, 1915.

In 1917 EMA published the first model code; "Uniform Regulations for the Construction and Installation of Passenger and Freight Elevators."

The first Safety Code for Elevators, ASME A17.1, was published in 1921. EMA represented the elevator industry on the ASME A17 Committee.

The Elevator Manufacturers' Association (EMA) reorganized and filed its constitution on March 8, 1934. EMA then became National Elevator Manufacturing Industry, Inc. (NEMI). NEMI membership was restricted to firms "which contracted for their own account and in their own names, for the furnishing and erection of complete passenger or freight elevators."

In January 1938, NEMI issued a booklet containing data sheets known as Elevator Layout Standards. The capacity in pounds-per-square-foot to which the platforms are loaded formed the basis for the industry standard.

In early 1969 the organization's name was changed from National Elevator Manufacturing Industry, Inc. (NEMI) to National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII). NEII broadened the membership criteria by adding "servicing" as a function entitling a firm to membership and adding additional products including dumbwaiters, residence elevators, escalators and moving walks.

NEII continues to focus its efforts on code, standards and safety including;

- Lobbying for the adoption of the latest editions of ASME A17.1/CSA B44, ASME A17.3, ASME A17.6 and ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7 without local modifications
- Identifying, monitoring and tracking governmental, legislative, regulatory, legal and political matters of importance to the elevator and escalator industry
- Developing and implementing effective strategy on matters targeted for action by educating and influencing media, policy makers, legislators, regulators and other stakeholders
- Continuing to provide members and non-members with essential information to keep them abreast of elevator and escalator safety information

## **The Early Years**

The initial recorded meeting between elevator contractors occurred on May 25, 1914 at the Iroquois Hotel, Buffalo, New York. A sub-committee was appointed to prepare the constitution and by-laws for the organization which would be called the Elevator Manufacturers' Association (EMA). There is no copy of the original constitution and by-laws available but apparently it was filed with the State of New York between May 25, 1914 and August 25, 1914.

The first convention of EMA was held October 21, through 23, 1914 at the Gibson House, Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to general business the following papers were presented:

- "Co-operative Competition"
- "Code of Elevator Regulations"
- "Aims, Methods and Results of the Work of the Massachusetts Board of Elevator Regulations"
- "Patent Situation"

- "Elevator Specifications"
- "Winning in the Open"
- "Standard Forms"
  - "The Uniform Proposal and Contract"
  - "The Owner Clause"
  - "Acceptance Form"

The first recorded contract between EMA and the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) occurred when Mr. Murphy, President IUEC came unannounced and requested that they be allowed to speak for 10 minutes to EMA meeting assembled at the Waldorf Astoria, New York City on April 14, 1915. They were allowed to address the meeting on the subject of the IUEC.

The Elevator Manufacturers' Association (EMA) reorganized and filed its constitution with the Secretary of State, State of New York on March 8, 1934. The name of the Association was National Elevator Manufacturing Industry, Inc. (NEMI). NEMI membership was restricted to firms "which contracted for their own account and in their own names, for the furnishing and erection of complete passenger or freight elevators."

In early 1969 the organization's name was changed from National Elevator Manufacturing Industry, Inc. (NEMI) to National Elevator Industry, Inc. (*NEII*). *NEII* broadened the membership criteria by adding "servicing" as a function entitling a firm to membership and adding additional products including dumbwaiters, residence elevators, escalators and moving walks. However, the requirement for "complete" units was retained.

From its inception, *NEII* represented its members in codes and standards and labor relations. The organization was instrumental in negotiating the Standard Agreement with the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) in the early 1930's and later established the National Elevator Industry Health, Retirement and Education plans.

This was principal *NEII* activity until 2002, when it reorganized forming two membership categories, Regular and Trust Members. *NEII* Regular Members continued to focus on code, standards, safety, communications and government affairs. *NEII* Trust members elect the Trust Committee which has sole responsibility for administering *NEII* rights and obligations regarding the National Elevator Industry benefit plans and educational programs. All other labor activities were discontinued.

*NEII* at this time revised the criteria for membership to include "those corporations, firms or companies that, as part of their regular business, provide or perform any of the following: manufacture (including parts or components used by others in the manufacture, repair or maintenance), install, repair and maintain elevators, escalators, moving walks and related equipment."

## Codes

From the very beginning safety has been a top priority for *NEII*. In 1917 EMA published the first model code; "Uniform Regulations for the Construction and Installation of Passenger and Freight Elevators." This first model elevator code appears to have been used as the starting point for the first ASME A17.1 Safety Code for Elevators, as the format and contents are remarkably similar.

The first Safety Code for Elevators, ASME A17.1, was published in 1921. The Elevator Manufacturers Association of the U.S., *NEII*'s predecessor, represented the elevator industry on the ASME A17 Committee. *NEII* representatives have actively participated on ASME A17 committees since they were formed. Throughout the history of ASME A17, *NEII* has funded and conducted numerous studies resulting in revisions to ASME A17.1 that have advanced elevator and escalator safety.

*NEII* has been a strong advocate for state enforcement of the Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, ASME A17.1. For many years, beginning in the 1940's, *NEII* published the Model State Law for Elevators, Dumbwaiters and Escalators. Today *NEII* supports and is a co-author of the Model Elevator Law, which has been adopted by many states.

In January 1938, *NEII* issued a booklet containing data sheets known as Elevator Layout Standards. The capacity in pounds-per-square-foot to which the platforms are loaded formed the basis for the industry standard. The 1937 edition of the American Standard Safety Code for Elevators, A17.1, contained capacity and loading curves for passenger elevators.

During the prior two years, the Central Code Committee of *NEII* made an exhaustive study of this subject. The Committee unanimously agreed that loadings beyond those shown in the A17.1 curves were not only possible, but, in practice, frequently occurred. The *NEII* Central Code Committee established a basis for determining the relationship between capacity and loading and derived an equation, which was approved by the A17.1 Safety Code for Elevators Code Committee.

A more recent example is the development of the ASME A17.1 requirements for the Step/Skirt Index. In 1997, *NEII* hired Arthur D. Little Inc. (ADL) to conduct an independent, scientific study of escalator step/skirt entrapment incidents and create a performance test to determine an escalator's potential to meet related safety criteria.

*NEII* submitted the recommendations from the ADL study to the ASME A17 Committee for inclusion in the ASME A17.1 and ASME A17.3 codes, and in the ASME A17.2 Guide for the Inspections of Elevators, Escalators and Moving Walks. The Escalator Step/Skirt Index was incorporated into the ASME codes in early 2001.

## **NEII Standards**

Once the operator-less elevator became the accepted standard for major office buildings, the performance of the equipment began to receive increased attention. Passengers expected better service and increased comfort. During the late 1950's, specifications for elevator equipment became more detailed

In the early 1970's buildings became taller and car speed increased. Performance time and ride quality issues such as acceleration and deceleration, and horizontal and vertical vibrations, became important standards. Noise produced by equipment became important as well. Doors were expected to operate at the highest speed commensurate with safety, smoothness and sound level requirements. Modifications to existing equipment could adversely affect safety and life expectancy.

Specifications that included performance requirements were often confusing, difficult to interpret, violated ASME A17.1 code requirements, or were perhaps impossible to satisfy without exposing owners and contractors to public and contract liability. *NEII* responded in 1994 by issuing a supplement containing performance standards to the *NEII* Vertical Transportation Standards.

An eighth edition of the *NEII* Standards published in 2000 expands on previous industry efforts to develop standards and guidelines. It also recognizes the industry's transformation to provide hard metric equipment. Maintenance guidelines were included for the first time. The document was once again renamed: Building Transportation Standards and Guidelines *NEII-1*.

In 2005, a new milestone was reached with the publication of *NEII-1* on the *NEII* website. Not only is *NEII-1* available electronically, updates to the document are being made in real time. Additions to *NEII-1* in 2005 included temporary power guidelines and form, electromagnetic compatibility guidelines, the ASME A17.1 data plate checklist, a seismic/flood requirement confirmation data form, a destination-oriented elevator performance terminology matrix, and a list of building conditions affecting escalator performance.

## **Employee Safety**

As far back as 1949, in conjunction with the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC), *NEII* developed a handbook of Safety Regulations for Field Employees. From the very beginning, *NEII* has encouraged the National Elevator Industry Educational Program (NEIEP) to emphasize safety in every educational module it developed. In the early 1970's, *NEII* was instrumental in working with NEIEP to develop Model 1 on Safety.

In the early 1970's the landscape for employee safety changed when the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) was signed into law. As OSHA ramped up in 1973, *NEII* members, in cooperation with Elevator World, developed the first Elevator Industry Field Employees' Safety Handbook. This action prompted *NEII* to establish the Safety Committee, formed to "develop, implement and maintain an efficient, accident-free environment for employees in the elevator industry."

In 1976, the *NEII* Safety Committee approached Elevator World with a proposal that it update the 1973 Safety Handbook. Elevator World published a new edition, in exchange for a commitment from *NEII* member companies to use the Elevator Industry Field Employees' Safety Handbook. A partnership was formed and the *NEII* Safety Committee authored new editions of the Safety Handbook, published by Elevator World, in 1977, 1983, 1986, 1991, 1995, 2000 and 2005.

## **New Technology**

In late 1990's *NEII* recognized that technology advancements in North America were lagging behind the rest of the world. Worldwide demand for safe innovative products was increasing. However, the prescriptive code in North America could not change rapidly enough to keep up with the demand and had become a barrier to new technology.

In order to evaluate the safety of new products, a Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators with a uniform structural approach was needed. In September 2002 *NEII* made a presentation to a joint meeting of the ASME A17 and CSA B44 Committees on the need in North America for a Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators.

The ASME A17 and CSA B44 Committees overwhelmingly supported *NEII*'s proposal and the ASME A17 New Technology Committee was established in January 2003 to develop a bi-national Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators.

Representatives from *NEII* member companies accepted leadership roles in the ASME A17 New Technology Committee. This effort culminated in the Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7 being unanimously approved by the ASME A17 Standards Committee and CSA B44 Technical Committee in May 2006 for publication in early 2007.

In conjunction with ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7, a revision was also approved to the Scope of ASME A17.1/CSA B44 that recognizes compliance with ASME A17.1/CSA B44 can be achieved by:

- Compliance with all of the requirements in the Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, ASME A17.1/CSA B44
- Compliance with some of the requirements in the Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, ASME A17.1/CSA B44, for those

requirements not complied with: compliance with the Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7

- Compliance with the Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7.

*NEII* accomplished another first on November 18, 2008, partnering with the National Association of Elevator Safety Authorities International (NAESAI), by putting on the first industry webinar. The webinar was for Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) and the topic was ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7. *NEII* also sponsored a website to keep the industry apprised of developments and answer questions about the Performance-Based Safety Code.

### ***NEII* Code Regulation Database**

In December 2003 the *NEII* Central Code Committee proposed to the *NEII* Board of Directors that a local code regulation database be developed and maintained by *NEII*. The *NEII* local code regulation database, CodeFinder, went live on the *NEII* web site September 1, 2006.

Three years in the making, the *NEII* CodeFinder database is an invaluable, one-of-a-kind resource for every level of North American elevator industry professional, from field personnel and engineers to manufacturing managers, company attorneys and senior executives. For the first time, there is now a single industry source for *NEII* member companies and their employees to search and find accurate, up-to-date information on all the local codes, standards and regulations that affect the industry.

Included in the database are all of the jurisdictional codes in the United States and Canada, as well as contact information for the enforcing authorities and a complete list of the codes they use. CodeFinder contains all of the important industry codes, including: electrical, accessibility, building, new and existing elevator, and life safety codes. Jurisdictional laws are also incorporated into the database for user's reference.

Perhaps one of the best features of CodeFinder is the fact that users will be able to see any modifications that are made to the model codes. Users will also be able to email the CodeFinder Editors with any errors they notice in the database.

### ***NEII* Looks to the Future**

*NEII* continues to focus its efforts on code, standards and safety including;

- Lobbying for the adoption of the latest editions of ASME A17.1/CSA B44, ASME A17.3, ASME A17.6 and ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7 without local modifications
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For a full *NEII* timeline [click here](#).

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