



Questions Canadians Should Ask

# When Moving into a Residential Building Equipped with an Elevator

When Canadians are looking to move into a new building, they often assess a number of building features like the fitness amenities, socializing space, parking and transportation options, and other factors. Equally important though is to also think about the elevators. Here are some useful points to ask or think about when considering a move.

## 1. How many elevators does the building have? How many should it have?

There are several internationally accepted guides for calculating the ideal number and type of elevators for residential buildings. For example, a 30-story building should have no less than three to four elevators, depending on a few factors like number of units per floor. Keep in mind that there may be times when one of the elevators is out of service for preventative maintenance or for a move.

Suggested Considerations:

- There should be one elevator per 90 units
- Denser urban apartments may need one elevator per 50-60 units
- For buildings over 10 floors, a service or freight elevator should be installed

## 2. If an elevator is older, how long has it been since it was last modernized?

Older buildings with older elevators can have their inner workings modernized and updated. This is referred to as modernization whereby the interior of the elevator has undergone a renovation however the equipment itself may still be older.

There are many reasons to choose buildings with a brand new or newer elevator. New elevators incorporate the latest safety features, are more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable, and offer better overall performance/reliability for the public.

## 3. How busy are the elevators during peak and non-peak hours?

Ask about the average waiting time during peak and non-peak hours. Peak hours typically occur when people are leaving or returning from work or school. The general standard for ideal wait times is less than or equal to 45 seconds.

## 4. Is there a service elevator in the building? Will move in and move out be done by taking out one of the regular passenger elevators?

Service elevators help reduce the burden on main elevators in a building, and direct routine service traffic and bulky items through a separate elevator. The ability to use a service elevator for moves also reduces the chances that you are waiting for one. Service elevators can also be used by site staff like cleaners and other trades.

For more information, please visit

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### **5. Does the elevator meet current building code requirement for ambulance stretchers?**

Some older buildings may have elevators that cannot fit modern ambulance stretchers or emergency equipment inside. If this may be a concern for you, ask about the elevator and whether it meets today's building code requirements.

### **6. What can be told about the reliability of the elevator and how frequently it goes out of service?**

Some types of outdated elevators, like single-speed elevators are prone to frequent recurring outages, even when they are very well maintained. History of recent elevator outages is a good predictor of future reliability.

### **7. Is there a system in place to notify residents when an elevator goes out of service?**

Elevator downtime can be a frustrating and inconvenient process, and no one needs surprises. What is the process in place to share planned service interruptions well in advance?

### **8. Does building management have an elevator modernization plan in place?**

If the building is a condominium, does the condominium Board have a detailed plan in place, with a reserve fund, for the modernization and replacement of the elevators as they age?

### **9. Who holds the maintenance contract?**

Is the maintenance contractor a reputable company with significant experience in providing excellent and timely service? NEEA member companies all provide this level of service.

### **10. Does the building have a full coverage maintenance agreement?**

Many maintenance contracts exclude specific components which may be costly to a condominium board if replacement is required. Exclusions typically include vandalism, insurable damage from floods, fire, and electrical storms, and after-hours service calls. Some contracts may also exclude obsolete equipment, or will require extra fees to remanufacture obsolete components.

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