Comprehensive Building Safety: Contactless Elevators

Reducing touch points in elevators
Ensuring a safe work environment is key to the success of any organization. When putting together a health and safety plan for your facility, adhering to governmental compliance requirements and reducing liability are a top priority. Building elevators offer a unique challenge across the return to work landscape, as elevator buttons are among the most-touched surfaces in a multi-tenant facility, and the small, enclosed footprint of an elevator makes it difficult to social distance.
Planning Elevator Safety Precautions

Implementing a plan for elevator usage in your building is a crucial step to preventing illness transmission. However, it’s important to create your safety plan depending on the size, type, and unique needs of your facility—using a one-size-fits-all approach is not the most effective solution. The following questions can help create a better understanding of how to approach safety in your building’s elevator system.

- How many elevators does your facility have?
- How many floors are served by elevators?
- How many people need access to the elevators on a daily basis?
- What is the capacity of your elevators?
- Can you monitor usage and shift schedules as needed?
- Do certain people have access only to specific floors?
- Do you want to prioritize touchless technology, or convenience and speed of moving people through the facility?

If maintaining a quick flow of people through your building is a top priority, such as in large multi-tenant high-rise buildings with automatic elevators that carry thousands of people each day, updating to contactless elevator technology may not be feasible without destination dispatch technology. An alternative option is to consider encouraging users to use a covered body part to press elevator buttons (such as a Kleenex, sleeve, etc), install hand sanitizer stations on each floor and in the lobby, and schedule more frequent elevator and lobby sanitization. If your facility can accommodate touchless technology in elevators, Openpath has a few options for implementation. If your facility can accommodate touchless technology in elevators, Openpath has a few options for implementation.

**Option 1: Relay-based touchless elevator configurations**

This configuration is optimal for smaller buildings with fewer elevator cabs and floors to accommodate. Openpath’s Elevator Board has 16 relays that can connect to elevators in a few different ways. A traditional approach is mapping these relays directly to elevator buttons, so when a user unlocks the elevator cab’s reader, the floors they have access to light up and can be activated. This method reduces the number of entries in the system, but it doesn’t reduce touch, since users still need to touch elevator buttons to go to their floors.

A contactless approach, in buildings with one elevator cab, could be to ask your integrator to wire Openpath relays directly to the elevator controller and create Openpath entries for each floor in the office. That way, a user could call the elevator by unlocking the ground floor entry in the Openpath app, enter the elevator, then unlock the third floor entry to send up the elevator.

**What is needed:**
- Openpath Access Control System
- Openpath Elevator Board (one per 16 floors)
- Openpath mobile app
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Option 2: Destination dispatch elevator integrations

Openpath’s touchless elevator configurations can also be configured for larger buildings with more elevators and additional floors, such as high-rise commercial office spaces or multi-family residential buildings. Use a bespoke integration with braXos elevator security systems and Openpath’s open API to create a contactless user experience. Openpath’s integration with braXos works by virtually mapping elevator relays with APIs and destination dispatch platforms, and controlling access to floors with Openpath.

What is needed:

• Openpath Access Control System
• braXos Openpath Connector
• braXos Steward middleware product

Conclusion

Many people use an elevator every day, whether it’s to access an office, apartment, or parking garage. However, with new health and safety guidelines being implemented across the globe, the way we access and use elevators is changing. No matter the size of your facility, enforce social distancing inside elevators, allowing only one or two people inside at a time. Updating the technology of your elevator system is another way to minimize liability in your building, but make sure your system is reliable, and offers added protection like tailgating security and multi-factor authentication capabilities. For smaller buildings, you can easily use a mobile access control system like Openpath to create a touch-free elevator experience with minimal interruption to the flow in your space.

Additional Resources

• Learn more about access control systems
  https://www.openpath.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-access-control-systems

• Learn how Openpath can automate and enforce health attestions
  https://www.openpath.com/workplace-health-screenings

• Learn about Openpath’s touchless access methods
  https://www.openpath.com/wave-to-unlock

• Learn more about Openpath features to help safeguard during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic
  https://www.openpath.com/covid-19-features

• Read our COVID-19 Office Safety Guide