

SUMMARY

Ineffective Use of Remote Monitoring Technology for New York City Transit Elevators and Escalators MTA/OIG Report #2011-08

Over the years, despite public concern, media attention, and demands for improvement by the MTA Board, elevators and escalators remain a serious problem. In the past, the variation of monitoring devices associated with different equipment made it challenging for NYC Transit to detect and diagnose outages in an efficient manner. Of particular concern were those incidents in which subway riders were literally trapped in elevators, forced to wait until NYC Transit personnel or emergency responders could come to their aid.

Our review found that E&E management had failed to integrate and take full advantage of Lift-Net's capabilities, missing the opportunity to more efficiently manage its response to equipment outages. Regarding the critical issue of entrapments, implementation of the relays had not been successful and E&E had been slow to respond to technical problems. The elevator entrapment relays, added to the Lift-Net system, transmitted thousands of false warnings. In July 2010 alone, more than 7,000 warnings were transmitted for elevators that had experienced 60 confirmed entrapments. Because of the large number of false warnings, E&E's Control Desk made the decision to ignore all entrapment warnings received from Lift-Net. Rather, it waited until either NYC Transit personnel or a call from a subway rider confirmed that passengers are trapped before notifying maintenance staff to respond—exactly the same approach used by NYC Transit prior to the installation of the relays.

OIG made a series of recommendations to help identify and eliminate deficiencies in the remote monitoring system, utilize the system's capabilities more effectively, and resolve problems with false entrapment warnings. The president of NYC Transit acknowledged that our report "highlighted numerous issues that require immediate attention" and that the agency views our findings and recommendations as another avenue to improve customer experience and overall station environment.

Press

[amNewYork article 12/8/11 - Escalating frustration](#)

[NY Daily News article 12/7/11 - Escalators in subway but owned by private companies go unfixed for years, MTA inspector general says](#)

[NY Post article 12/7/11 - Massive delays in subway escalator repairs](#)