

Chapter 30

Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan— Inspecting Elevating Devices

1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK) improved its processes to inspect elevating devices.

At August 2023, TSASK was responsible for inspecting over 4,300 elevating devices (e.g., escalators, elevators) in the province.

By August 2023, TSASK followed its risk-informed strategy for prioritizing inspections and performing escalator inspections within intervals set in the strategy or within reasonable timeframes when TSASK encountered delays. Timely inspections reduce the risk of escalator incidents causing injury.

TSASK and the Ministry of Government Relations had not yet formalized an expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices. However, since June 2022, TSASK reported on overdue inspections in its quarterly Safety Standard Reports to the Ministry. TSASK appropriately defined overdue inspections as those that exceeded timeframes based on its risk-informed strategy. Reporting on overdue inspections allows the Ministry to monitor TSASK's performance.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK) administers Saskatchewan's safety programs for boilers, pressure vessels, elevating devices, amusement rides, gas and electrical licensing and inspections, and plumbing inspections on behalf of the Ministry of Government Relations under the Safety Standards Agreement.^{1,2} Specifically it administers and enforces *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act* and related regulations.

Effective regulation of elevating devices helps keep the public safe. Elevating devices refer to any apparatus, appliance, or device used for lifting or lowering persons or material from one permanent level, floor, or landing to another. Regular and proper inspections are a key component of effective regulation. In addition, strong inspection processes encourage device owners to maintain elevating devices within industry standards, and reduce the risk equipment deficiencies go undetected and unaddressed.

¹ The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan is a not-for-profit organization established under *The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act*.

² The Safety Standards Agreement is an agreement between TSASK and the Ministry of Government Relations effective July 31, 2020. The agreement establishes the rights and responsibilities of both the Ministry and TSASK as the Ministry delegated administration of *The Amusement Ride Safety Act*, *The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999*, and *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act*, including regulations to TSASK. The agreement outlines the obligations of both parties (e.g., TSASK shall administer, perform and fulfill all duties, obligations and responsibilities under the Acts; the Ministry shall collaborate, advise or consult with TSASK as required), reporting requirements (e.g., TSASK to provide the Ministry a quarterly report), as well as gives the Ministry and TSASK the right to access each others' records as required to perform their duties.



2.1 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our third follow-up audit of management's actions on the recommendations we first made in 2017.^{3,4} In 2017, we concluded The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan had effective processes to inspect elevating devices, except in the areas of our seven recommendations. As reported in our *2021 Report – Volume 2*, TSASK implemented five of our seven recommendations by July 2021.⁵

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate TSASK's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. TSASK management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our audit examination, we interviewed TSASK management and staff. We examined TSASK policies and procedures relating to inspecting elevating devices. We assessed the functionality of TSASK's IT system, and the reasonableness of supporting documentation. We also examined escalator inspection frequency, and a sample of quarterly reports provided to the Ministry of Government Relations.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at August 31, 2023, and the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan's actions up to that date.

3.1 Risk-Informed Strategy for Prioritizing Inspections Implemented

We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan perform in-service inspections of escalators in accordance with a risk-informed inspection strategy. (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 201, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

Status—Implemented

Since June 2021, the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan has used its risk-informed strategy to perform inspections of escalators.

The risk-based strategy uses a rating based on a risk score assigned to each escalator to determine the inspection frequency. For example, the inspection frequency for low- and medium-risk escalators is every 12 months, and every six months for high-risk escalators.

We found TSASK completed escalator inspections based on the inspection intervals within the strategy, or within a reasonable timeframe when TSASK encountered delays. For 26 out of 37 escalator inspections we tested that occurred in both 2022 and 2023, TSASK completed the inspections by the expected inspection date.

³ 2017 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 14, pp. 193–205.

⁴ 2019 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 41, pp. 353–258.

⁵ 2021 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 38, pp. 269–272.

For 11 out of 37 escalator inspections we tested that occurred in 2022, TSASK completed the inspections between 5–61 days after the expected inspection date:

- Nine inspections completed within 30 days of the expected inspection date
- Two inspections completed 61 days after the expected inspection date, but an external inspection (i.e., a visual inspection on safety-related items that can be performed with no scheduling requirements and minimal down time to the escalator) was completed prior to the expected inspection date
- 10 of the 11 escalators inspected later than expected had a low-risk rating and one had a medium-risk rating meaning it is unlikely for the escalator to fail, and the consequences of possible failure would be minor

For 11 out of 37 escalator inspections we tested that occurred in 2023 (for the same devices tested for 2022), TSASK completed the inspections between 5–69 days after the expected inspection date:

- Seven inspections completed within 30 days
- Four inspections completed between 34–69 days after the expected inspection date

Overall, our testing found only a few escalator inspections completed a couple months after the expected inspection dates in 2022 and in 2023. Management indicated that escalator inspections after the expected inspection date were due to various scheduling issues. We found the reasons for delays reasonable. For example, flight schedules affect the timing of escalator inspections at airports. In addition, inspection scheduling must be confirmed with store owners who may be affected by out-of-service escalators in shopping malls. Since inspections may take between 4–8 hours, TSASK works with owners to schedule an inspection time suitable for all stakeholders.

TSASK has a query built into its IT system (Basebridge) that reports outstanding or overdue inspections (i.e., identifies elevating devices past expected inspection date). This report allows management to monitor outstanding inspections. We found management regularly runs this query and provides inspectors with priority and overdue inspections to conduct.

Performing regular in-service inspections in accordance with a risk-informed strategy reduces the risk of equipment deficiencies going undetected and unaddressed. It also reduces the risk of elevating-device incidents that can result in injury.

3.2 Overdue Inspections Reported

We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan and the responsible Ministry define the expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices to enable reporting of overdue inspections. (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 205, Recommendation 7; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

Status—Implemented



Although the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan and Ministry of Government Relations have not yet formalized the expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices, TSASK began reporting overdue inspections to the Ministry on a quarterly basis in June 2022.

The Ministry of Government Relations is required to monitor TSASK under the Safety Standards Agreement because TSASK administers elevating device inspections on behalf of the Ministry. TSASK and the Ministry have not yet formally defined a required frequency of inspections under the Agreement.

Each quarter, TSASK reports to the Ministry on elevating devices as required under the Safety Standards Agreement. These reports include:

- Total number of inspections completed during the quarter
- Total number of reported incidents since the last report (quarter)
- Details on issued corrective actions (i.e., inspections with noted deficiencies) during the quarter
- Total number of overdue inspections (i.e., TSASK's required inspection interval exceeded)

At August 31, 2023, TSASK tracked overdue inspections using the query built into its IT system based on inspection frequencies approved internally as part of its risk-informed inspection strategy. Since June 2022, TSASK included information on overdue inspections based on this strategy in its quarterly reports submitted to the Ministry to allow the Ministry to monitor TSASK's performance.

We tested two quarterly reports and found TSASK appropriately reported the number of overdue inspections. For example, the March 2023 report showed that TSASK had 870 inspections overdue for all elevating devices.

TSASK indicated that it and the Ministry have ongoing verbal conversations about future changes to the Safety Standards Agreement, and TSASK expects a new Safety Standards Agreement by December 2023. We encourage TSASK and the Ministry to formalize an agreement on the required frequency of inspections.

Agreeing on how often TSASK should inspect elevating devices would help TSASK understand Ministry expectations and facilitate appropriate monitoring of inspections for elevating devices.