Subject: What to do when stuck in a Lift?

[“Eight people get stuck in Church lift for two hours” Bengaluru: Sep 21, 2015, DHNS:]

Fire and Emergency Services staff rescued eight people, including two children, who were stuck in a lift at the St Mark’s Cathedral Church on MG Road for two hours on Saturday night.

A technical snag caused the lift to jam between ground and first floors some time after 9 pm. Those stuck inside called up their friends at the cathedral for help.

A mechanic was called and he tried various means to bring the lift to the ground floor but in vain. They called the fire control room around 9.30 pm.

Emergency services personnel arrived at the spot but were dismayed to find there was no duct.

They had to break a portion of the wall on the first floor to pull out those trapped in the lift, said a fire officer. All this took nearly half an hour. There were no causalities. The lift users had come to attend a wedding at the cathedral. They were going down when the lift jammed.]

The above news item prompted me to prepare this note. What is surprising is the failure of the lift mechanic to open the lift door, and the fire brigade personnel making a wall opening for the rescue.

People getting stuck in the elevator has become a common incident, but no attempt have been made by Lift manufacturers, or the lift users to prevent this incident. Lakhs are spent for the elevator purchase and maintenance but they do not spend 50 or 100 Rs to have an extra fireman’s key.

Lift / Elevator stops functioning, when there is

- Power failure, ( many elevators now have inverters to cater this failure)
- When there is overload.
- Due to circuit problem, like card failure or motor failure among others.

What to do when stuck in lift?

- Press the alarm button of the carriage.
- If lucky in getting mobile signal, call for help from outside.
- If no help comes from the above, see if the carriage door opens by using both your hands. If it opens you are very luck, place some object to prevent the car door closing.
- See the lever which holds the outer door in closed position. Push this lever and the outer door opens.
- Be careful to see the position of the lift before you escape out.

Footnote:
During mid 80’s I got stuck in the boiler lift of Unit # 3, Trombay Thermal station for 3 hrs. No mobile or phone was available at that time. We had a code of conduct in the maintenance dept, if a person is not seen for more than 2 hrs, check the lift operation. Luckily my absence was noticed and the technician while checking all the lifts, noticed the stuck lift and rescued me. This incident made me to study the operation of lifts and also lead the technicians for future rescue within the power house.

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