

Inclinator's Road to Certification

Inclinator Co. of America, Inc., a manufacturer of home elevators, wheelchair lifts, stair package lifts and dumbwaiters, was one of the first companies to take advantage of the *ASME A17.7/CSA B44.7 Performance-Based Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators*. Since its latest product, the Inclinator LX residential elevator, incorporates material and sheave and cable sizes not specified in the prescriptive-based A17.1 code, it was important for the company to utilize the newly developed performance-based code (PBC) guidelines. Working closely with Dirk Schroeter of TÜV SÜD America



(l-r) Dirk Schroeter and Stephen Nock

Inc. (a PBC-accredited elevator/escalator certification organization), Inclinator was able to carry out thorough risk analyses on such aspects as equipment longevity and brake traction.

Being a “test subject” in the new process wasn’t easy, though, according to Stephen Nock, Inclinator president. He admitted that Inclinator initially underestimated the complexity of the rigorous risk analyses that the new code requires. However, he stated, with confidence in its valid design and enough tenacity, the process was successful. Going a step further than necessary, Inclinator used Pennsylvania State University Mechanical Engineering professors as “facilitators” to review its processes. This unbiased review helped prevent any tunnel vision toward which the company may have been led, according to Nock. It also made use of Jim Coaker, chair of the A17/B44 New Technology Committee, as a technical expert.



The Inclinator LX, which incorporates the recently certified technology, was heavily promoted in Inclinator's booth at United.

Nock stressed that Inclinator's achievement proves that the PBC process is for all companies in the industry – not just the majors. He explained that the challenge is to prove that the technology in question is just as safe as existing technology, so a new mindset has to be adopted by those involved. Nock's advice to small companies that want to use A17.7/B44.7? “Do your homework on the engineering side.”