

# 12 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK WHEN SELECTING A RESIDENTIAL ELEVATOR MANUFACTURER

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## When Selecting a Residential Elevator Manufacturer

Whether you're considering adding an elevator to your existing home or including it in your plans for a newly-constructed one, you probably have lots of questions. After all, adding an elevator to your home is a major purchase that requires careful planning and coordination. You want to be sure you're making the right decision every step of the way.

We put this guide together to help those just getting started find the answers they need to move to the next step. Here are the 12 questions you should ask any elevator manufacturer before you start building.

### 1. How long has the manufacturer been in business?

As in any industry, the longevity of the company is a barometer for customer service, product quality, and commitment. Inclinitor Company of America has been in business under the same family ownership since 1923.

The residential elevator industry is filled with new and untested companies. Many companies sell direct and not through an authorized and trained dealer, so it's best to ask about their history before selecting any elevator company.

### 2. Is there a local authorized dealer available to build, service, and maintain my elevator?

This is one of the most important questions to ask when considering a residential elevator company. Many manufacturers are able to sell for less by selling direct to the consumer, eliminating authorized dealers. However, this often leads to safety issues, installation problems, and frustrations for the homeowner when there is no local dealer to repair and maintain the elevator equipment.

Purchasing through a local, authorized dealer who can professionally install and maintain your elevator is the best approach for long-term peace of mind.





### 3. How much space will I need to install an elevator in my home?

Typically an unfinished hoist way of 5'x5' is large enough for practically any home elevator. Your elevator manufacturer should provide you with information explaining all the space requirements. For example, Inclinator provides [Planning Guides](#) that are perfect for your architect or designer to review in preparation for elevator installation.

Keep in mind that most elevator companies have minimum cab sizes that are larger than what is practical for the average homeowner. There are times when a homeowner who has limited space will need a smaller elevator. Inclinator's space-saving monorail design allows for smaller elevator cabs, due to the smaller dimensions of our elevator bases.

### 4. Do I need to have space for a machine room?

Residential elevators are typically available into two types: those that require a machine room, and those that don't. Those that don't are referred to as machine room-less, or MRLs. There are pros and cons to each type.



For example, though an MRL elevator does not require a machine room, it does require additional space at the top of the hoist way to house the motor and gearbox mounted at the top of the rails. This equipment would typically be stored in a separate machine room. Your manufacturer or dealer should explain the pros and cons of each elevator type and help you make the best decision for your needs.

## 5. Are residential elevators safe?

Yes. There are many safety features incorporated into the design of residential elevators, including interlocks for the gates and doors to prevent the elevator from moving when either is open. Electronic battery lowering systems also ensure the elevator can be lowered in the event of a power outage.

Despite the built in safety features of elevators, it is still important to research both the manufacturer and elevator dealer who will be installing and maintaining the elevator. Some manufacturing companies do not partner with local installation and maintenance companies. They use their own employees or even sub-contractors to install the elevator and don't provide a local authorized dealer to maintain the elevator.

Having access to local maintenance and service technicians is critical to maintaining a safe elevator system.

At Inclinor, we value our customers' safety and only sell our elevators through authorized dealers who are part of the local community.



## 6. How do I know if my elevator manufacturer and the local installation company follow the National Codes for Safety?

You need to be proactive and ask them.

It is important to know that in 2016 a set of revisions was made to the safety code for residential elevators – the 2016 ASME 17.1/CSA B44 – to prevent entrapment and injury of small children between the hoistway door and the car door. This new code became effective on May 30, 2017.



These national safety standards are voluntary and, as such, will not be followed by all companies or enforced by all states. Therefore, you need to ask the local elevator dealer and the elevator manufacturing company if they comply with the 2016 safety codes.

At Inclinor, where safety has always been our top priority, every elevator that we sell is manufactured to these new, voluntary, safety standards.



## 7. How much lead-time is involved to build my elevator?

Typically, an elevator can be produced by a custom elevator manufacturer within 4-8 weeks of a factory order. Variables that can affect the time to delivery include things like the type of elevator cab you order and the drive system it uses. Ordering an elevator is a major purchase that should involve careful planning and deliberation.

Keep in mind that you shouldn't order your elevator until construction on the elevator shaft is complete. This is important because if the shaft is not built perfectly, the elevator may need to be modified to work within the shaft. This means additional time and money will need to be spent. It is far better if the elevator is built to the proper specifications the first time.

You should allow at least 2 months to account for final selections, production scheduling, manufacturing of the elevator, and shipping time.

## 8. What weight capacity do I need?

Home elevators are typically available in 4 different capacities - 500#, 750#, 950#, and 1000# capacity units. The higher the weight capacity, the more people can ride in the elevator or the more things you can carry in it.

Elevators with higher weight capacities also have higher design thresholds. At a minimum, the national elevator codes require that a 500# unit only be used on a platform size of up to 12 sq. ft. Any platform between 12 and 15 sq. ft. must have a weight capacity of at least 950#.

While no one is likely to complain about having too much capacity, how you plan to use the elevator and the number of people that will use it regularly will likely influence your decision. Your elevator dealer will help you determine the proper size for your unique situation.

## 9. Can my elevator be used by people with special needs?

Yes. The car operating panel and hall stations can include braille for the blind.

Elevators can also be designed for those in wheelchairs by ensuring there is enough space to accommodate a wheelchair. Automatic gate and door operators are also available to help those with special needs.

## 10. How much should I budget for an elevator?

The final purchase price of a residential elevator is calculated from the equipment price from the manufacturer, the shipping costs from the manufacturer, and the amount charged by the installation company to install the elevator. Labor and shipping rates vary depending on the location of the project and the location of the manufacturer. Prices can vary tremendously depending on where you live. You should certainly contact a local installation company for accurate pricing, but for rough budgetary planning purposes a basic, two - stop elevator can be installed somewhere between \$20K and \$35K.

If you are installing an elevator in a new home, the shaft construction is simpler and less expensive. However, if you need an elevator to be installed in an existing home, you will need a general contractor to frame out a shaft to accept the elevator.



## 11. Why do I need a professional elevator installer?

The biggest reason is safety!

Professional elevator installers have the proper training to ensure your new elevator is installed according to established codes and regulations. Professional installation also provides better reliability over the long-term.

## 12. How often will my elevator require service and maintenance?

A residential elevator should be serviced by a qualified elevator mechanic at least once per year.

As you can see, there's a lot of planning and preparation that goes into the process of adding an elevator to your home. We hope you've found this guide helpful and invite you to [contact the Inclinator dealer nearest you](#) to get started on your elevator project!