

VARIANCES FOR ELEVATING AND TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY**Date of Issue: February 17, 2026****No: IB-ED 2026-01**

Topic: This information bulletin provides technical and administrative guidance for requesting a variance for elevators, passenger ropeways, and amusement rides.

Part 1. Background

This information bulletin is intended for elevating devices' owners, licensed elevating devices contractors, and engineers.

Important: Variances provide a mechanism for addressing unique design constraints or exceptional circumstances. They are **not** intended as a means to bypass or circumvent code requirements.

What Is a Variance Used For?

A variance is a document that allows certain requirements of the applicable adopted codes or the Elevating Devices Safety Regulation (the Regulation) to be varied or modified for a specific elevating device. It allows alternative arrangements to be made to achieve an equivalent level of safety.

A variance may be considered, when:

- 1- The regulated product, including a site or equipment, is unable to meet a specific code requirement but is able to provide equivalent safety measures.
- 2- The regulated product (equipment) meets the newer edition of the code which has not been adopted yet.
- 3- Achieving compliance would deteriorate the structural integrity of the building and or structure.
- 4- The regulated work is an engineered new or novel design that is not addressed in the applicable adopted code but provides an equivalent level of safety.

Variance Application

A request for a variance does not guarantee a variance will be granted. Variance approval depends on the rationale for the request and the proposed equivalent safety measures.

Proper Use and Intent of Variances

Variances provide a mechanism for addressing unique design constraints or exceptional circumstances. They are **not** intended as a means to bypass or circumvent code requirements.

Key Reminders

1. **Purpose of a Variance:** Variances apply only when code compliance is genuinely unattainable, regardless of cost. Variances are not a mechanism for resolving existing non-compliances.
2. **Abuse of the Variance Process:** Using the variance process to circumvent code requirements undermines its intended purpose and weakens regulatory integrity.

3. **Proactive Identification:** Potential design constraints requiring a variance must be identified during the planning and design stages, and before inspections are completed. Waiting until a safety officer is on-site to address these issues is neither appropriate nor acceptable, and lack of early/advance planning is not a relevant consideration in granting a variance.
4. **Applicability and Continuity of an Approved Variance:** The licensed contractor installing or maintaining the device, whether the original contractor or a subsequent contractor, must continue to comply with the approved variance's proposed alternative, including its terms and conditions, unless and until full code compliance is achieved.

For more details, refer to [our website](#).

Part 2. Variance Processing Workflow

- Variance applications must be submitted using your [Online Services account](#).
 - For guidance on how to fill out the form on the portal, refer to the attached **Appendix A**.
 - For more information, please visit our [website](#).

Variance Decisions and Status: A variance may be:

- **Accepted:** If the proposed variance is accepted, the proposed alternative must be implemented, and the terms and conditions of the variance must be maintained at all times. The variance is automatically void if any of its terms and conditions aren't met.
- **Rejected:** If the proposed variance is rejected, compliance with the requirements of the code and the Regulation must be achieved, regardless of the inspection results. When a variance is rejected, the applicant has the right to make a written request for review by a safety manager (see Safety Standards Act Section 32 (4)-(6)).
- **Cancelled:** A variance application may be cancelled with or without a fee when:
 - compliance with the requirements is achieved and Technical Safety BC has been informed properly before the application is reviewed; or
 - the variance request is based on a misinterpretation of the applicable code requirement, and it is determined that the installation already conforms to the code clause for which a variance is requested for, such that a variance is not required.

Abandoned Applications: An application will be considered "abandoned" if the applicant does not respond to our inquires within a reasonable amount of time, no longer than 12 weeks from when we reach out. The outcome of the application will show as "rejected" and fees will apply.

Part 3. FAQs

- **How to Submit a Variance Request Through the Online Portal?**

For guidelines on how to apply for a variance and fill out the online forms, refer to the attached **Appendix A**.
- **Who Is Responsible for the Variance?**

The owner of an elevating device is responsible to ensure that all new and existing elevating devices are operated in accordance with the Regulation and the manufacturer's specifications, as per [EDSR Section 21](#), including compliance to any variance issued.
- **Does Technical Safety BC Issue Blanket Variances?**

Technical Safety BC does not issue "blanket" variances for multiple jobs or devices. A separate variance application is required for each individual unit. Applications are reviewed on an individual basis.

- **Are Previously Issued Variances Precedent?**

The issuance of a variance is not precedent setting. This means that each variance application is reviewed individually, and the issuance of a variance does not guarantee any future variance approvals.

- **How Does Technical Safety BC Assess Safety Equivalency?**

When reviewing a request for variance, different factors may be considered, including but not limited to the following:

- At what stage of the unit's lifecycle is the variance application being requested?
- What is the reason for the variance request?
- Is there a site condition that makes code compliance impossible or impractical? (If the answer is no, then a variance is likely not appropriate).
- What hazards are addressed by the code/regulation clause for which the variance is being requested?
- Do the proposed equivalent safety means adequately address the hazards created by the varied condition, resulting in an equivalent level of safety? (If the answer is no, the variance would not be approved).
- What method is utilized for hazard elimination created by the variance? Elimination, engineered hazard elimination, or a combination of methods should be used. If the variance relies only on PPE or administrative hazard elimination, it will likely not be approved.
- The expense or costs to make the unit code compliant is **not** a factor taken into consideration within the review of a variance application (i.e. the cost of bringing a unit into compliance is not a valid justification for approving a variance.)

- **Where to Post and Keep the Approved Variance Letter?**

For all approved variances,

- A copy of the variance, including its supporting documents, must be kept onsite with the maintenance/permanent records.
 - For elevators, escalators, and dumbwaiters (units covered under CSA B44), documentation must also follow requirements 8.6.1.2.2 of the code.
 - For platform lifts and star lifts (units covered under CSA B355), it must be kept adjacent to the device.
 - For amusement rides and passenger ropeways, it is acceptable for a copy of the variance to be included in the applicable section of the maintenance or operations manual.
- A copy of the variance, showing its terms and conditions, must be posted on site:
 - For elevators, escalators, and dumbwaiters (units covered under CSA B44):
 - The copy must be posted in a conspicuous location in the machine room; **or**
 - A note shall be posted in the machinery/control space indicating the presence of a variance. This note should include the affected equipment/procedure and the applicable code section(s)/clause(s).
 - For platform lifts, stair lifts, and personnel hoists (units covered under CSA B355 and CSA Z185), a note must be posted inside or adjacent to the controller, indicating presence and location of the approved variance letter.
 - For amusement rides and passenger ropeways, it is acceptable for a copy of the variance to be posted in a conspicuous location available to operations and maintenance personnel as applicable (machine rooms, operator buildings, etc.)

Part 4. Common Variance Requests

For elevators and lifts, there are certain variance requests that occur more frequently than others; **Appendix B** provides additional information on these common variance requests for elevators, escalators, platform lifts, and stair lifts, including established terms and conditions. However, depending on the specifics of the variance request, additional terms and conditions may also be included upon approval.

Note that following the established terms and conditions in Appendix B does **not**, on its own, authorize any deviation from code requirements. An approved variance must be in place in order to vary the requirements or apply an alternative.

Regulatory Basis

[Section 32](#) of the Standard Safety Act (SSA) provides allowance in varying the application of a provision of the Elevating Devices Safety Regulation (the [Regulation](#)) with respect to a regulated product or regulated work.

These instruments allow statutory decision makers to issue a variance(s):

- **CSA B44 2016 – Section 1.2.2.1**

The specific requirements of this code shall be permitted to be modified by the authority having jurisdiction based upon technical documentation or physical performance verification to allow alternative arrangements that will assure safety equivalent to that which would be provided by conformance to the corresponding requirements of this code.

CSA Z98 2014 – Section 1.5

For novel designs, new configurations that cannot be precisely classified, and cases of reported nonconformance, exceptions from the requirements of this standard may be made, provided that equivalent safety is provided.

CSA Z267 2000 – Section 1.4

In case of novel design, or new configurations that cannot be precisely classified, or cases of reported nonconformance, exceptions from the requirements may be made, provided that equivalent safety is provided.

- **Safety Standards Act – Section 32 Variances**

(1) A safety officer may, if requested by any person, issue, in writing, a variance to the person varying the application of a provision of the regulations with respect to a regulated product or regulated work.

(2) A variance may:

- (a) be made subject to terms and conditions specified by the safety officer; and
- (b) continue for a specified period of time.

(3) If the person who holds a variance complies with the terms and conditions of the variance, the person must be considered to be in compliance with the regulation that it varies.

(4) If a person applies for a variance and a safety officer refuses to issue it, or issues it with terms or conditions attached to it that are not requested or agreed to by the applicant, the safety officer who deals with the application must inform the applicant and, if the applicant requests written notice, give the applicant written notice of that decision.

(5) A written notice under subsection (4) must state the reasons for the decision and that the applicant has the right to make a written request for a review by a safety manager.

(6) A decision of a safety manager on a review of a decision under subsection (4) is not appealable to the appeal board.

Definition of Elevating Devices:

In the Elevating Devices Safety Regulation (the [Regulation](#)), an elevating device is defined as the following:

An "elevating device" means any apparatus, mechanism, or device that is installed or positioned for the purpose of raising, lowering, moving, carrying, conveying or directing persons, materials, or goods, and includes any of the following: a passenger ropeway, an amusement ride, a recreational railway, a rotating platform, a personnel hoist, a stage lift, and a special elevating device.

It also includes elevators, escalators and moving walks, dumbwaiters, material lifts, platform lifts and stair lifts, and special application elevators.

Provincial Safety Manager - XXXX

References:

Safety Standards Act
Elevating Devices Safety Regulation
ASME A17.1/CSA B44
CSA Z98
CSA Z267

Attachments:

Appendix A: Guides on How to Submit the Variance Application Through the Online Services Portal
Appendix B: Frequent Variance Requests for Elevators, Escalators, and Platform Lifts and Stair Lifts