DGS Elevators FAQs

This information is as of February 2026.

1. **What is the Department of General Services' (DGS) role in elevator maintenance at District facilities?**

   DGS oversees the maintenance, repair, and inspection of all conveyance systems, including elevators, wheelchair lifts, and material lifts—across DCPS schools, DPR community and recreation centers, DHS shelters, and other vital buildings within the DGS portfolio at municipal buildings.

2. **How many conveyances are there under the Department of General Services' (DGS) purview?** 319.

3. **How is DGS notified about an elevator that needs to be fixed?**

   DGS receives work orders from DC government client agency staff through the Salesforce system.

4. **How are elevator work orders prioritized?**

   DGS prioritizes elevator service needs based on an established call type system used across the industry. Each category reflects the urgency of the situation, the resources required, and the level of technical expertise needed. This structure ensures that the most critical issues receive immediate attention while routine needs are handled efficiently.

   Call Types and How DGS' Prioritizes Them

Call Type	Description	Priority Level
Emergency Call	Critical safety issues, such as a person trapped in an elevator	**Emergency** technicians are dispatched immediately
Out of Service Call	The elevator is completely offline and unusable	**High** addressed as soon as possible to restore service
Callback / Trouble Call	Minor malfunctions, such as door issues or intermittent faults	**High** scheduled promptly based on technician availability
Vandalism Call	Repairs needed due to intentional damage or misuse	**Routine/High** addressed after safety critical issues
Routine Maintenance Call	Scheduled inspections and preventative maintenance	**Routine** planned in advance to minimize downtime

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5. **What challenges can affect how quickly elevator repairs are completed?**

   Some of the most common challenges include but are not limited to:

   a. **Parts that do not match across brands**
   Technicians may not have the correct components on hand, especially for older or proprietary systems, which can lead to ordering delays.

   b. **Different training for different elevator brands**
   A technician who is certified on one model may not be trained on another, which can extend diagnosis and repair time.

   c. **Separate supply chains for each manufacturer**
   Because each brand uses its own distribution network, getting the right parts can take longer.

   d. **Limited interchangeability of components**
   Even basic items like buttons, sensors, or door motors often can't be swapped between brands, requiring special sourcing or tools.

   e. **Higher costs and fewer efficiencies**
   When parts and equipment are spread across multiple manufacturers, it's harder to benefit from bulk purchasing or priority service with a single vendor.

   These factors do not prevent repairs, but they can impact how quickly issues are resolved.

6. **Why do some elevator repairs take longer than others? How does the age of the elevator impact the timeline for repairs?**

   Repair timelines are influenced by the age of the elevator and the availability of required components. Newer systems generally allow for faster repairs, while older units may require extended timelines due to limited part availability or discontinued components.

   a. **Elevators in service less than three years**
   Repairs on newer elevators are typically more straightforward. Many components, especially electronic boards, are still widely available, allowing technicians to complete repairs more quickly.

   b. **Repairs involving advanced control systems**
   When issues occur within the control system, specialized parts may be required. These components are not always stocked, which can extend repair timelines by several weeks.

   c. **Aging elevators**
   As elevators age, key components such as CPU boards may fail. In these cases, the controller often must be removed, repaired, and retested. This is a process that typically takes **2-6 weeks**.

d. **Obsolete or discontinued parts**
For older systems, some parts may no longer be manufactured. When a component must be custom produced by the manufacturer, the timeline can extend to **4–12 weeks**.

These factors ensure repairs are completed safely and correctly, but they can significantly influence how long an elevator remains out of service, depending on its age and the availability of necessary parts.

7. **How often are elevators serviced and by whom?**

All elevators are serviced once a month. An annual inspection includes having trained, qualified contractors systematically examine, adjust, clean, lubricate, and maintain all elevators and lifts to ensure safe operation. This includes repairing or replacing all necessary machine, motor, generator, and controller components with parts equal to or better than the original manufacturer's standards, documenting all repairs, and engaging another qualified contractor if repairs cannot be completed. All of these aforementioned activities are witnessed by a third-party inspector for annual inspections.

8. **What does DGS do when the one elevator in a DCPS building goes out and you have an administrator or student with an ADA accommodation?**

When an elevator is out of service and DCPS confirms that individuals with disabilities are on-site, the work to fix that elevator is prioritized.

9. **What contingencies are in place for when an elevator is down?**

DGS does not have contingencies for an elevator that is out of service. There are no temporary elevators, or wheelchair lifts available for temporary installation during an outage. DCPS may make accommodations to ensure the students or staff do not have any operational impact.

10. **Does DGS use in-house staff or contractors to fix elevators?**

DGS uses contractors to repair elevators.

11. **How many contractors does DGS have to fix elevators?**

DGS currently has one contracting company repairing elevators, with plans to add an additional contractor in April 2026.

12. **How does DGS ensure any elevator work is completed accurately and safely for the elevator's best use?**

DGS uses trained and licensed elevator contractors. Upon completion of repairs, contractors provide photos and/or videos demonstrating that the elevator is functioning properly.

13. **Is DGS currently working on any major elevator projects?**

Yes, active capital projects for elevator replacements, such as the John A. Wilson Building, the Marion Barry Jr. Building, Emery (DCPS Reading Clinic) School, The Aston, and other projects that are less than a full modernization, will receive new elevators. The Marion Barry Jr. Building elevators have an estimated completion date (ECD) of Summer 2026; the John A. Wilson Building elevators have an ECD of Fall 2027; the Emery School elevators have an ECD of Winter 2026; and The Aston elevators have an ECD of Summer 2028.