

Universal Standards of Serviceability and Maintainability

The computerized “brain” of elevator systems is referred to as the “controls”. We recommend specifying non-proprietary controls that meet established standards for Universal Serviceability and Maintainability. These standards include the following elements:

- Any elevator company may purchase and install the equipment.
- The control system comes with all available diagnostic tool functions, either onboard or in a separate device. Such maintenance, adjustment and troubleshooting device or system provides unrestricted access to all parameters, levels of adjustment, and flags necessary for maintenance of the equipment.
- There is no expiring software or key that could degrade operation.
- Any lost or damaged tool may be promptly replaced/repaired at reasonable cost.
- Training is available at reasonable cost from the original equipment manufacturer for enrollment by anyone who wishes to learn about installation, adjustment, maintenance and troubleshooting the equipment.
- The original equipment manufacturer provides engineering support to any maintenance contractor designated by the building owner.
- Manuals, engineering drawings, circuit diagrams and prints are provided with the equipment at time of delivery. All documentation is available for replacement purchase, at reasonable cost, by any installing or maintaining elevator contractor or persons designated by the building owner.

The “Big Four” companies’ controls fail to meet several or all of these standard elements. This is not surprising, since maintenance contracts provide some of their most profitable work. In fact, manufacturers have been known to low-ball pricing on new systems, knowing they will make up the lost profit through many years of service contracting that is not subject to competitive bidding.

Use of truly non-proprietary controls opens the door to competitively bidding maintenance, thereby holding down the total life cycle cost of the equipment. Open competition also means the Owner can replace a non-performing service company if necessary, and—as with competition in other fields—this tends to keep the selected contractor on its toes.