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## Blues investigate escalator accident that hurt 13

The St. Louis Blues said Friday that a three-story escalator at the Scottrade Center would remain shut down during an investigation into why it malfunctioned, injuring 13 people, following the team's home opener.

By **BETSY TAYLOR**  
 Associated Press Writer

ST. LOUIS —

The St. Louis Blues said Friday that a three-story escalator at the Scottrade Center would remain shut down during an investigation into why it malfunctioned, injuring 13 people, following the team's home opener.

The escalator was crowded with game spectators when it broke down around 9:30 p.m. Thursday. "From what I could tell from looking at it, it looked like the bottom four steps collapsed," said Capt. Bob Keuss with the St. Louis Fire Department.

Four adults and a child were taken to hospitals. Keuss described the injuries as not serious, from twisted ankles to sore backs and necks.

The escalator passed its inspection in August "with flying colors," according to St. Louis Blues Enterprises CEO Peter McLoughlin, who handles business matters for the hockey team and the Scottrade Center.

"It comes as a great surprise and is an unfortunate event," he said of the malfunction.

It appears rails on the sides of the escalator that support its steps collapsed, causing the bottom steps to buckle, Keuss said. One person's shoe or clothes had to be freed from the mechanism, he said.

Kim Muren, 18, of Belleville, Ill., told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch the escalator sped up before the stairs collapsed. "People were falling and piling on top of each other," she said.

In 2008, after a code change, Scottrade's escalators needed pieces installed to prevent feet from getting stuck between steps and side panels, according to records from the Missouri Division of Fire Safety, which includes a unit that oversees escalator and elevator safety.

The records indicate "no violations" since, meaning the pieces had been put in place, and an Aug. 20 inspection showed no problems with the escalators.

State Fire Marshal Randy Cole said he wants an inspector from his office involved in safety checks on the escalator that malfunctioned.

Escalator problems have surfaced at other stadiums and arenas. In 2003, an escalator at Denver's Coors Field accelerated unexpectedly after a Colorado Rockies game, dumping off fans. Dozens of people were injured, and some needed surgery.

Denver officials found that a safety switch was missing, while the manufacturer instead blamed overcrowding and a misconnected wire.

A small group of Blues owners and officials visited the injured at two hospitals Thursday night. McLoughlin said Friday he believed all had since been released.

Events will go on as scheduled at the Scottrade, with a concert Friday and the Blues' next home game set for Saturday night against the Los Angeles Kings. The Atlanta Thrashers beat the Blues 4-2 on Thursday.

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  - [Local](#)
  - [Nation/World](#)
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  - [Entertainment](#)
  - [Living](#)
  - [Travel](#)
  - [Sports](#)
  - [Opinion](#)
  - [Extras](#)
  - [Today's news index](#)

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  - [Autos](#)
  - [Homes](#)
  - [Rentals](#)
  - [Classifieds](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [NWsource](#)
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- [Home delivery](#)
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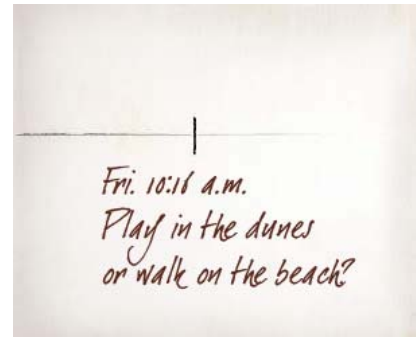
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