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GB 2000327A
GB 1522185
GB 1515338
GB 1477241
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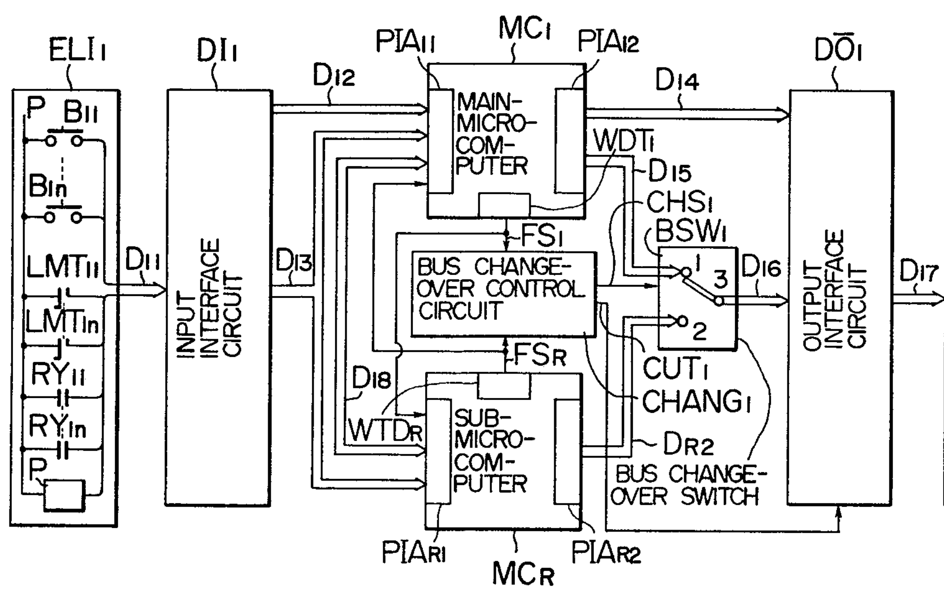
(54) **Apparatus for controlling rescue operation of elevator**

(57) The operation control section of an elevator system is constituted by two micro computers MC_1, MC_R one of which shares the processing function with the other. One of the computers has a means for detecting an abnormality occurring in the other computer and stores therein a program for bringing the elevator cage to the nearest floor when the cage is stopped in an intermediate position between floors. If one of the computers becomes faulty the cage is immediately stopped for ensuring the safety of passengers. This can also be used to control a plurality of elevator cars.

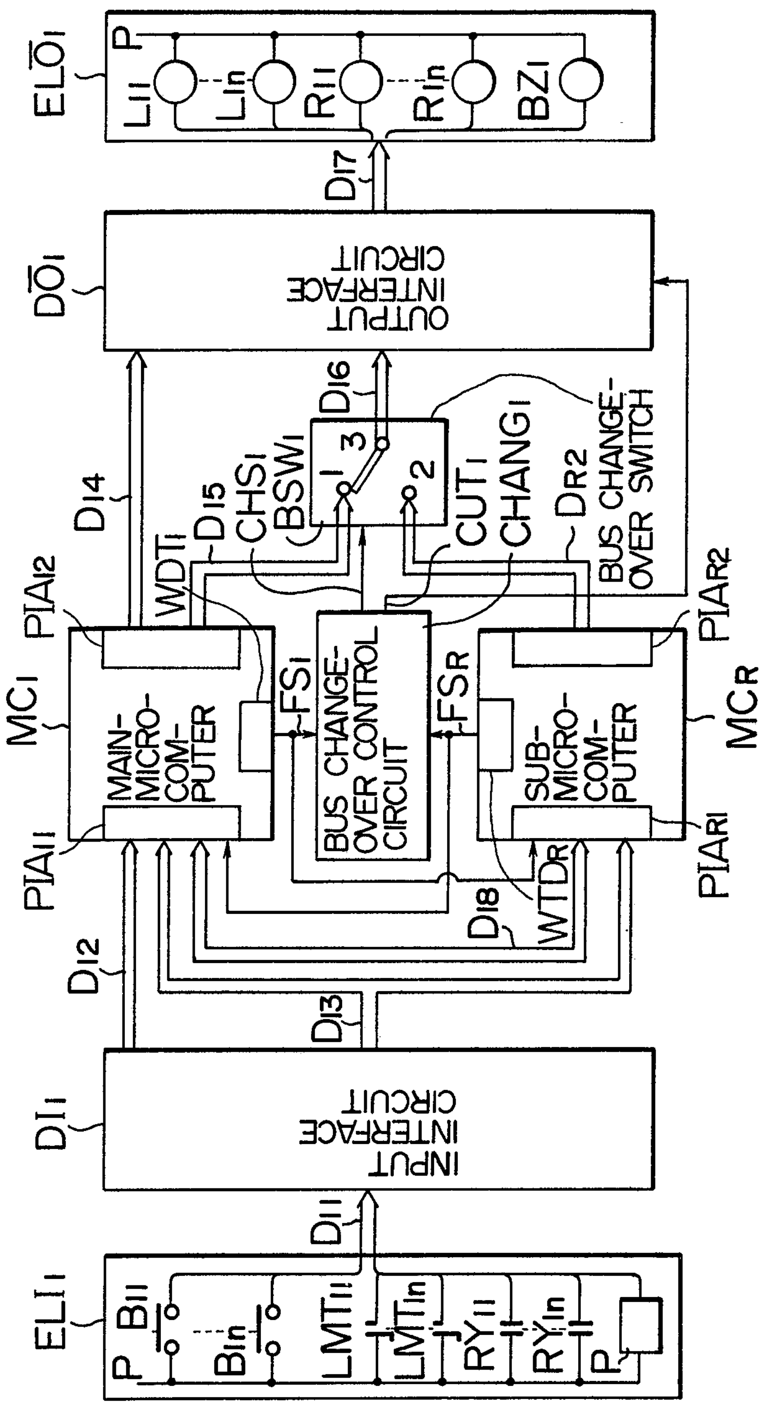
F I G. 1



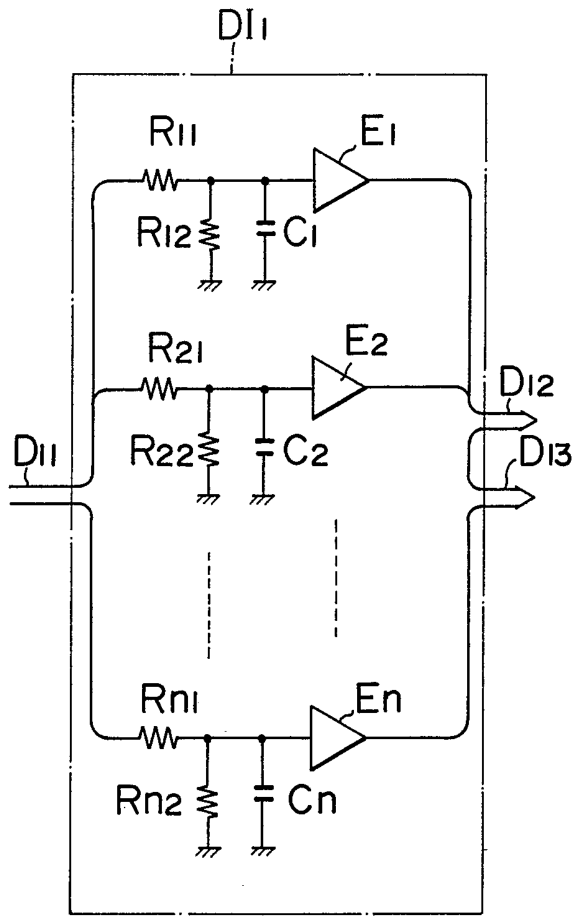
The drawings originally filed were informal and the print here reproduced is taken from a later filed formal copy.

GB 2 034 928 A

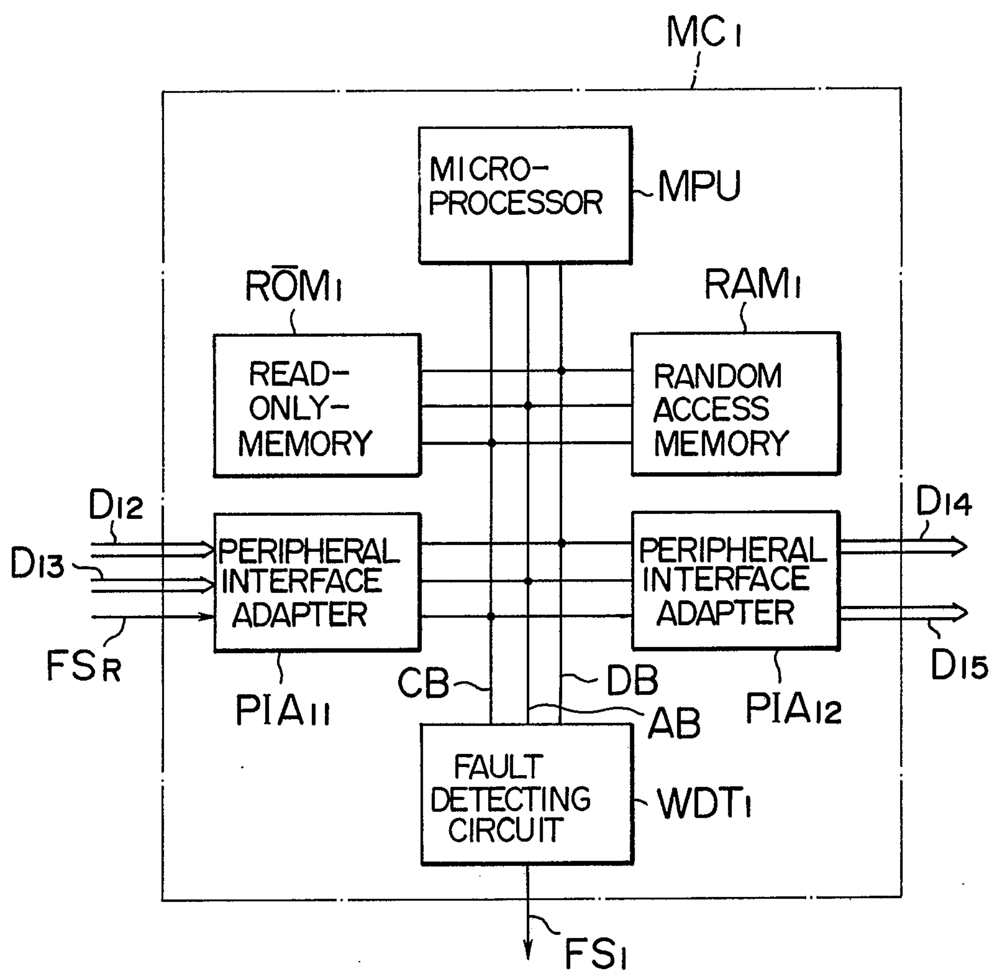
FIG. 1


ELO1
P
L11
L1n
R11
R1n
BZ1
D17
DO1
OUTPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
D16
BUS CHANGE-OVER SWITCH
3
1
2
D14
WDT1
D15
CHS1
BSW1
CUT1
CHANG1
DR2
PIA12
PIAR2
MC1
MAIN-MICRO-COMPUTER
FS1
BUS CHANGE-OVER CONTROL CIRCUIT
FSR
SUB-MICRO-COMPUTER
MCR
PIA11
PIAR1
D18
WTDR
D12
D13
DI1
INPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
D11
ELI1
B11
B1n
LMT11
LMT1n
RY11
RY1n

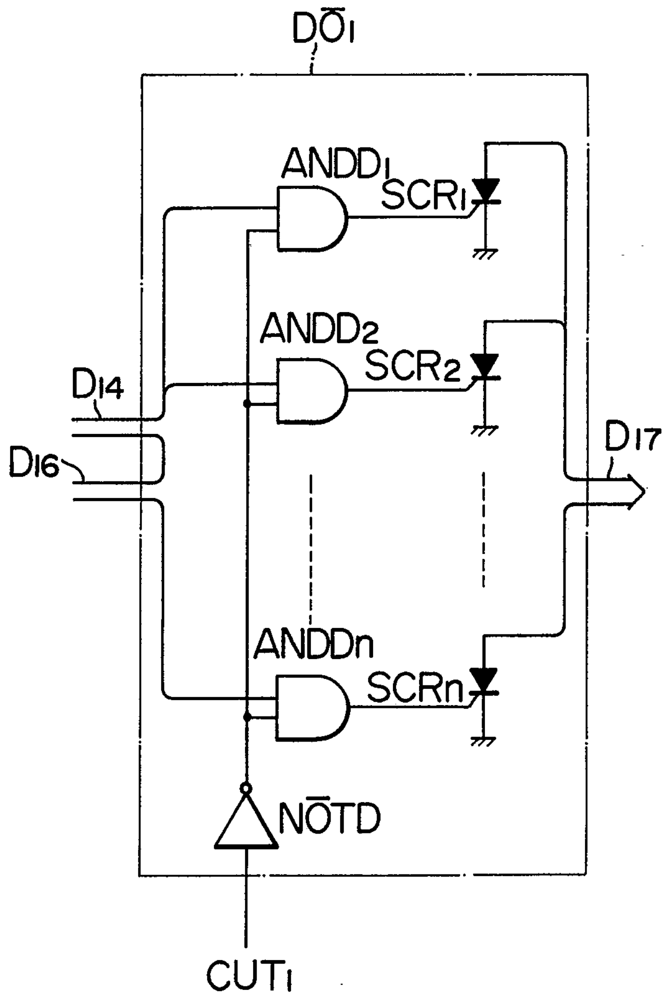
F I G. 2



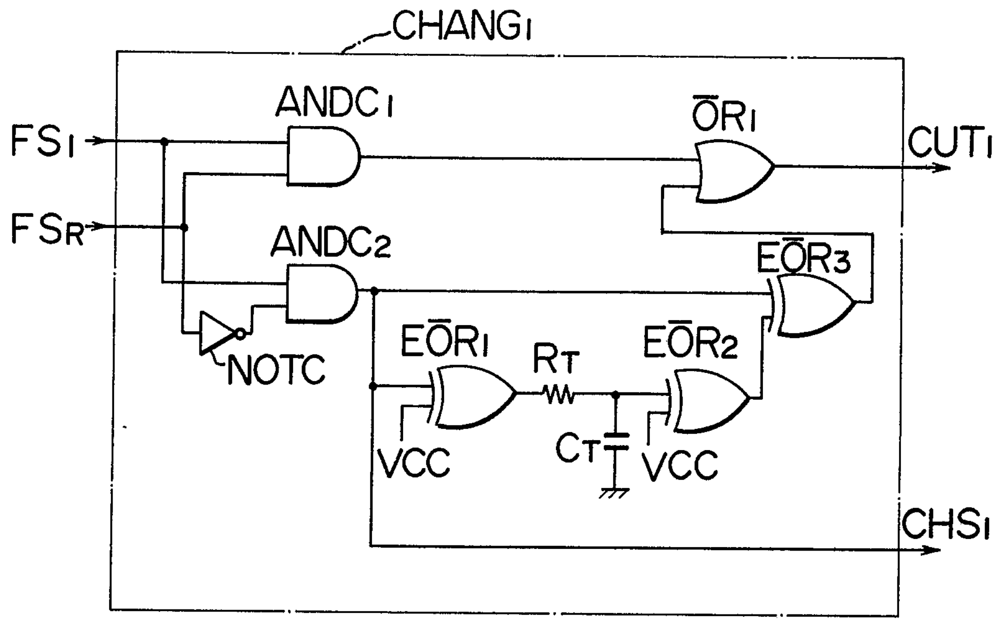
F I G. 3


MC1
MICRO-PROCESSOR
MPU
ROM1
READ-ONLY-MEMORY
RAM1
RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY
D12
D13
FSR
PERIPHERAL INTERFACE ADAPTER
PIA11
D14
D15
PERIPHERAL INTERFACE ADAPTER
PIA12
CB
DB
AB
FAULT DETECTING CIRCUIT
WDT1
FS1

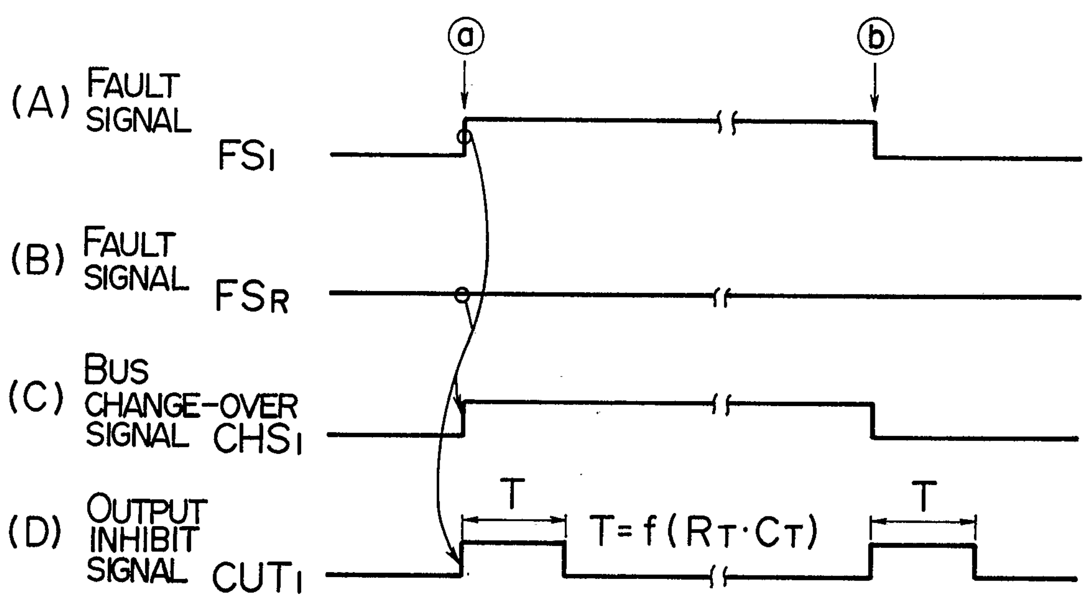
F I G. 4



F I G. 5


CHANG1
ANDC1
FS1
FSR
ANDC2
$\bar{O}$R1
CUT1
E$\bar{O}$R3
NOTC
E$\bar{O}$R1
RT
E$\bar{O}$R2
CT
VCC
VCC
CHS1

F I G. 6


a
b
(A) FAULT SIGNAL FS1
(B) FAULT SIGNAL FSR
(C) BUS CHANGE-OVER SIGNAL CHS1
(D) OUTPUT INHIBIT SIGNAL CUT1
T
T
T= f (RT·CT)

F I G. 7

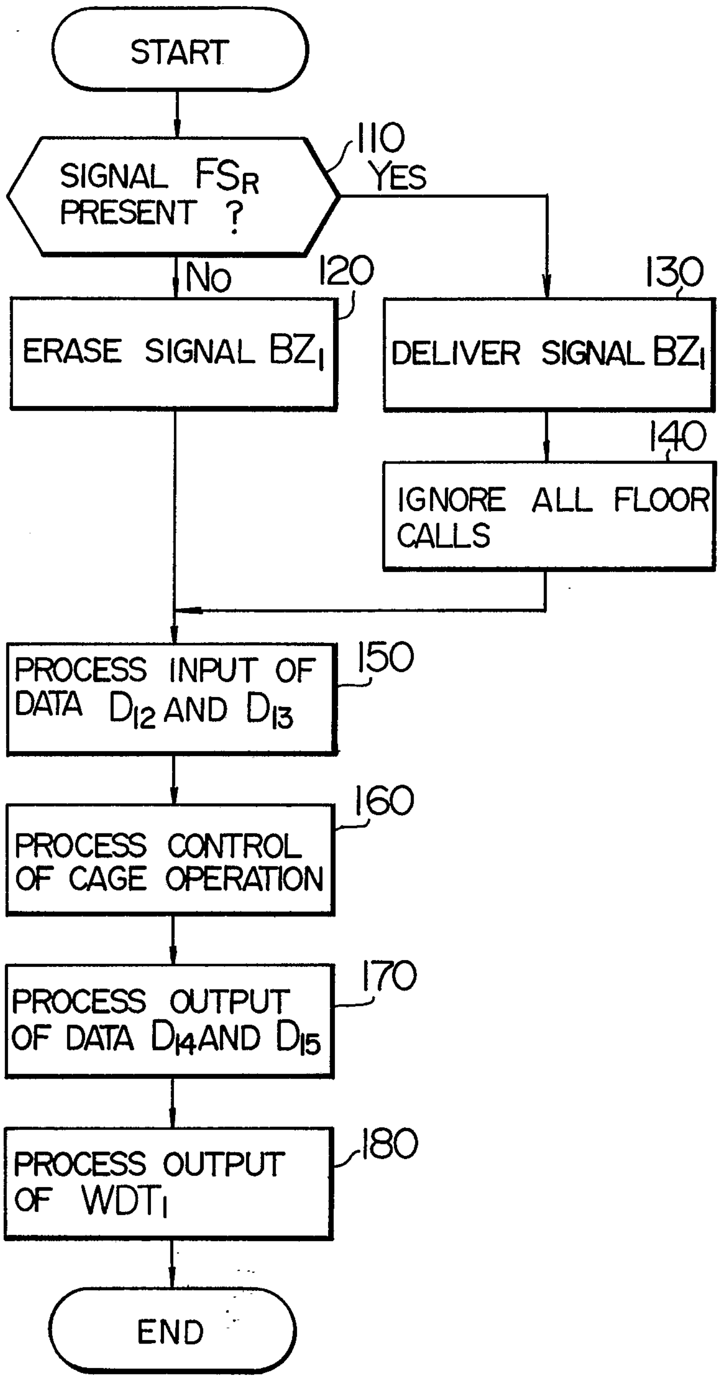
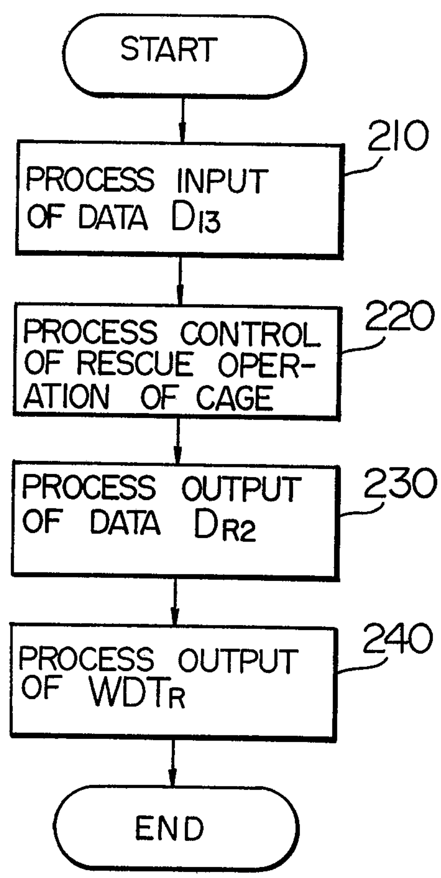

START
SIGNAL FS_R PRESENT ?
110
YES
NO
120
ERASE SIGNAL BZ_I
130
DELIVER SIGNAL BZ_I
140
IGNORE ALL FLOOR CALLS
150
PROCESS INPUT OF DATA D_{12} AND D_{13}
160
PROCESS CONTROL OF CAGE OPERATION
170
PROCESS OUTPUT OF DATA D_{14} AND D_{15}
180
PROCESS OUTPUT OF WDT_I
END

FIG. 8


START
PROCESS INPUT OF DATA D13
210
PROCESS CONTROL OF RESCUE OPERATION OF CAGE
220
PROCESS OUTPUT OF DATA DR2
230
PROCESS OUTPUT OF WDTR
240
END

F I G. 9

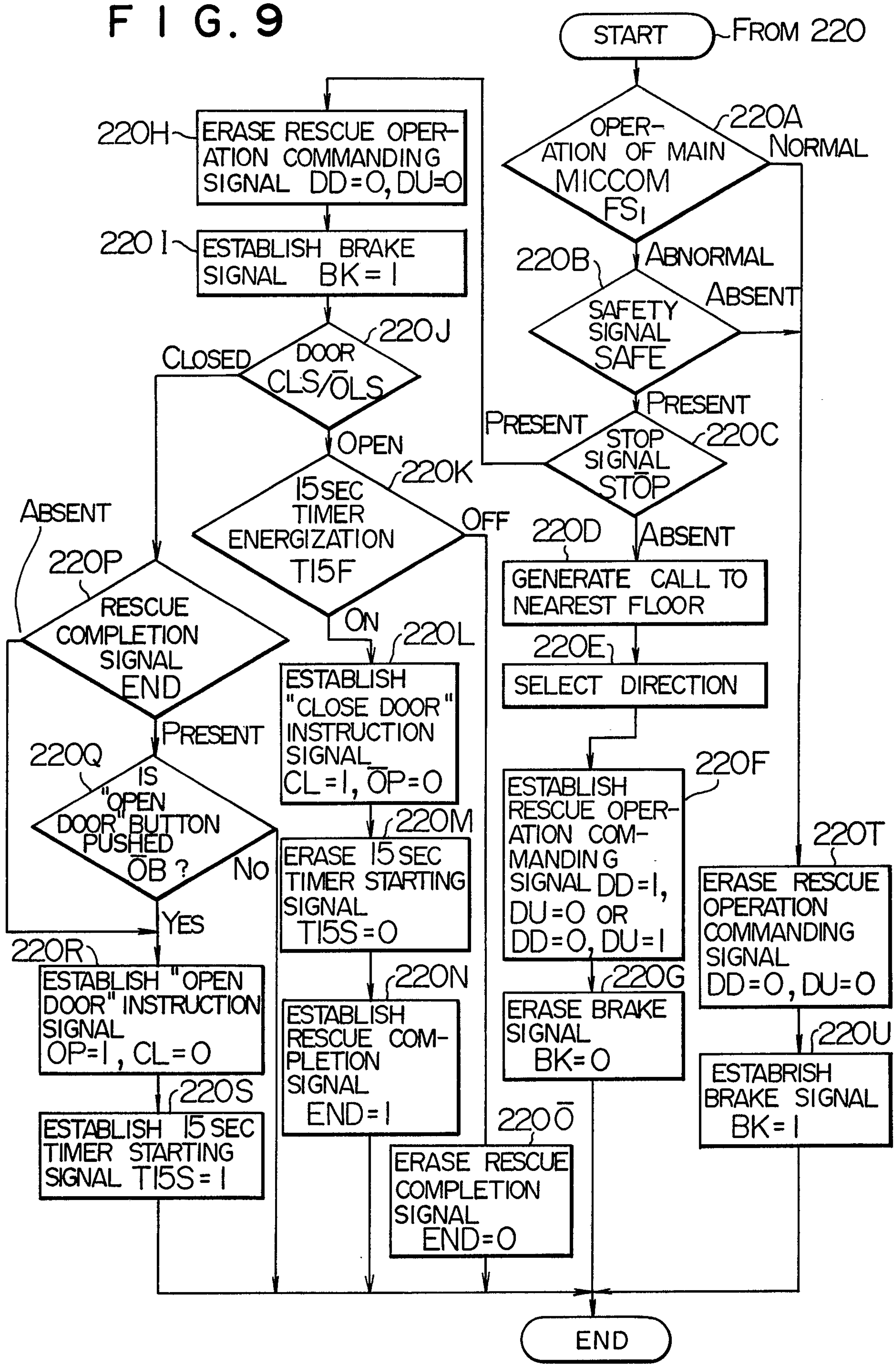

START
FROM 220
OPERATION OF MAIN MICCOM FS1
220A
NORMAL
ABNORMAL
220B
SAFETY SIGNAL SAFE
ABSENT
PRESENT
STOP SIGNAL STOP
220C
PRESENT
ABSENT
220D
GENERATE CALL TO NEAREST FLOOR
220E
SELECT DIRECTION
220F
ESTABLISH RESCUE OPERATION COMMANDING SIGNAL DD=1, DU=0 OR DD=0, DU=1
220G
ERASE BRAKE SIGNAL BK=0
220T
ERASE RESCUE OPERATION COMMANDING SIGNAL DD=0, DU=0
220U
ESTABRISH BRAKE SIGNAL BK=1
220H
ERASE RESCUE OPERATION COMMANDING SIGNAL DD=0, DU=0
220 I
ESTABLISH BRAKE SIGNAL BK=1
220J
DOOR CLS/OLS
CLOSED
OPEN
220K
15 SEC TIMER ENERGIZATION T15F
OFF
ON
220L
ESTABLISH "CLOSE DOOR" INSTRUCTION SIGNAL CL=1, OP=0
220M
ERASE 15 SEC TIMER STARTING SIGNAL T15S=0
220N
ESTABLISH RESCUE COMPLETION SIGNAL END=1
220O
ERASE RESCUE COMPLETION SIGNAL END=0
ABSENT
220P
RESCUE COMPLETION SIGNAL END
PRESENT
220Q
IS "OPEN DOOR" BUTTON PUSHED OB ?
NO
YES
220R
ESTABLISH "OPEN DOOR" INSTRUCTION SIGNAL OP=1, CL=0
220S
ESTABLISH 15 SEC TIMER STARTING SIGNAL T15S=1
END

FIG. 10

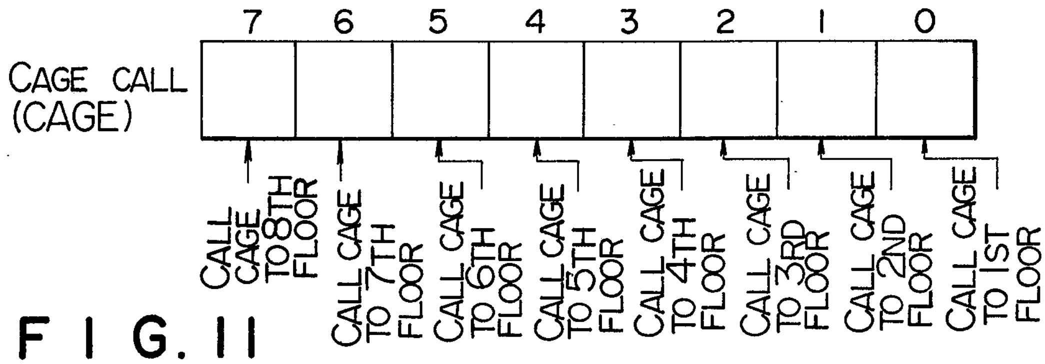


FIG. 11

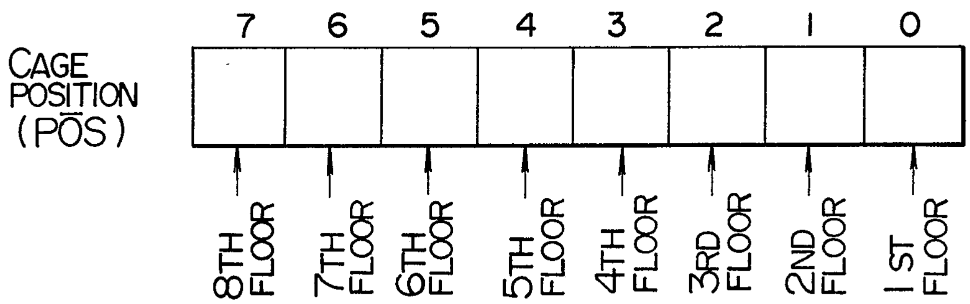


FIG. 12

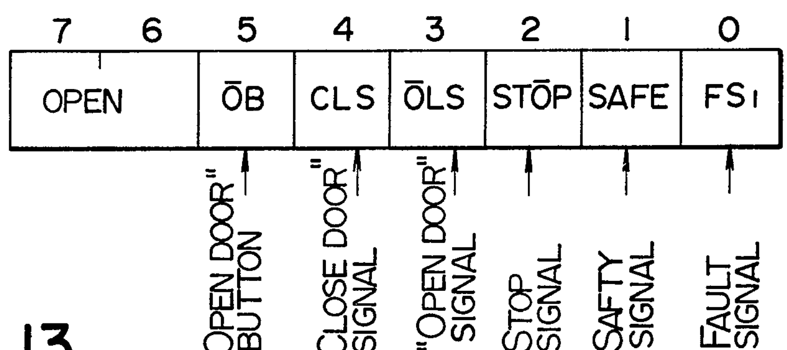
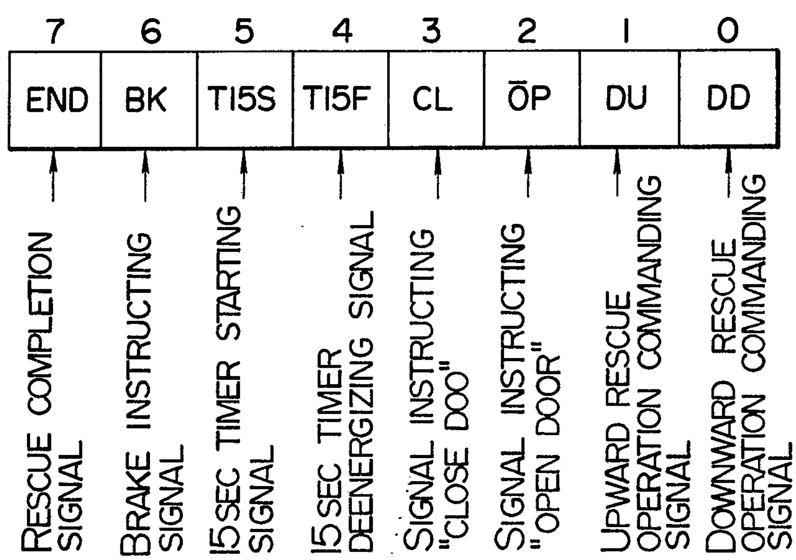
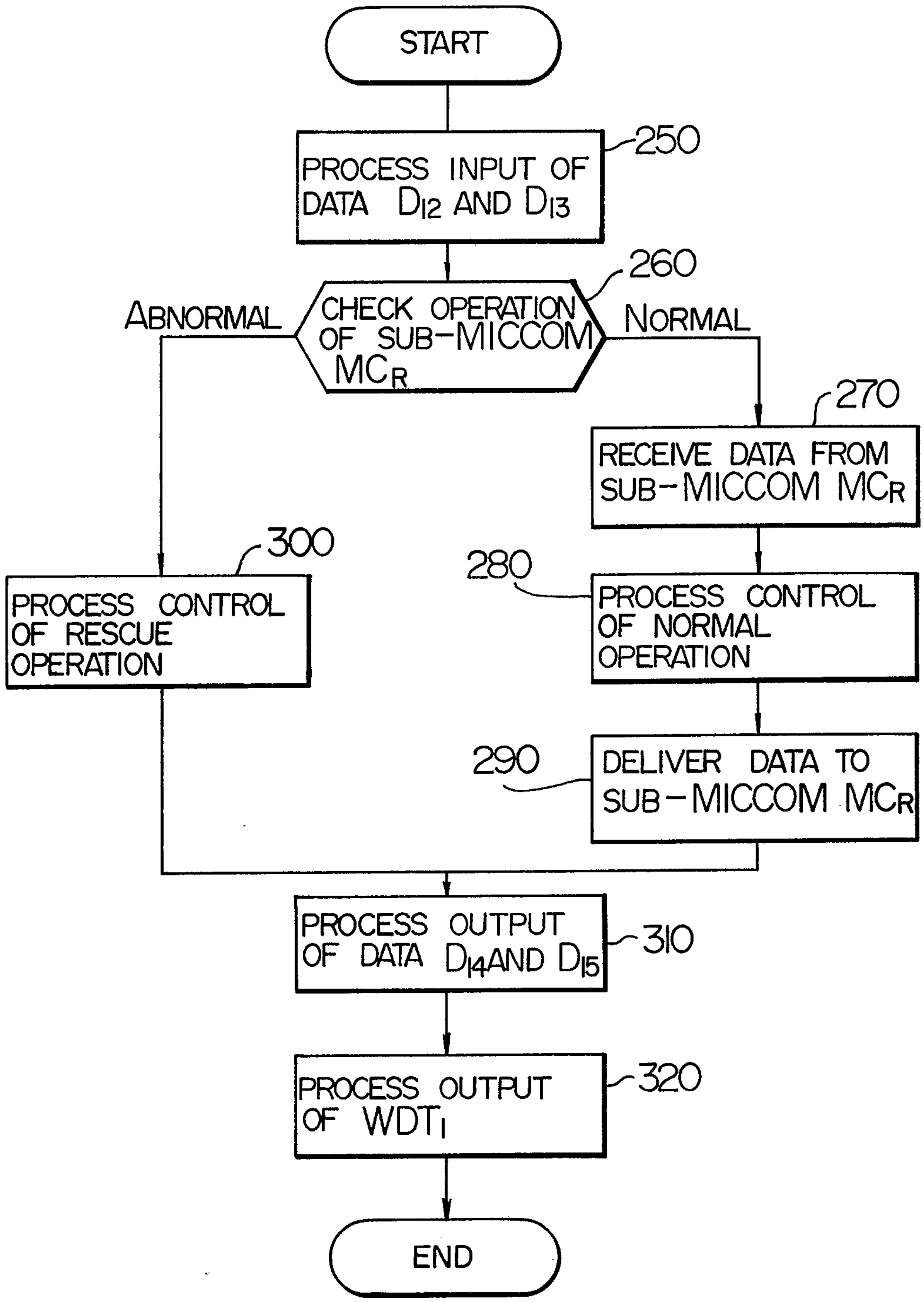


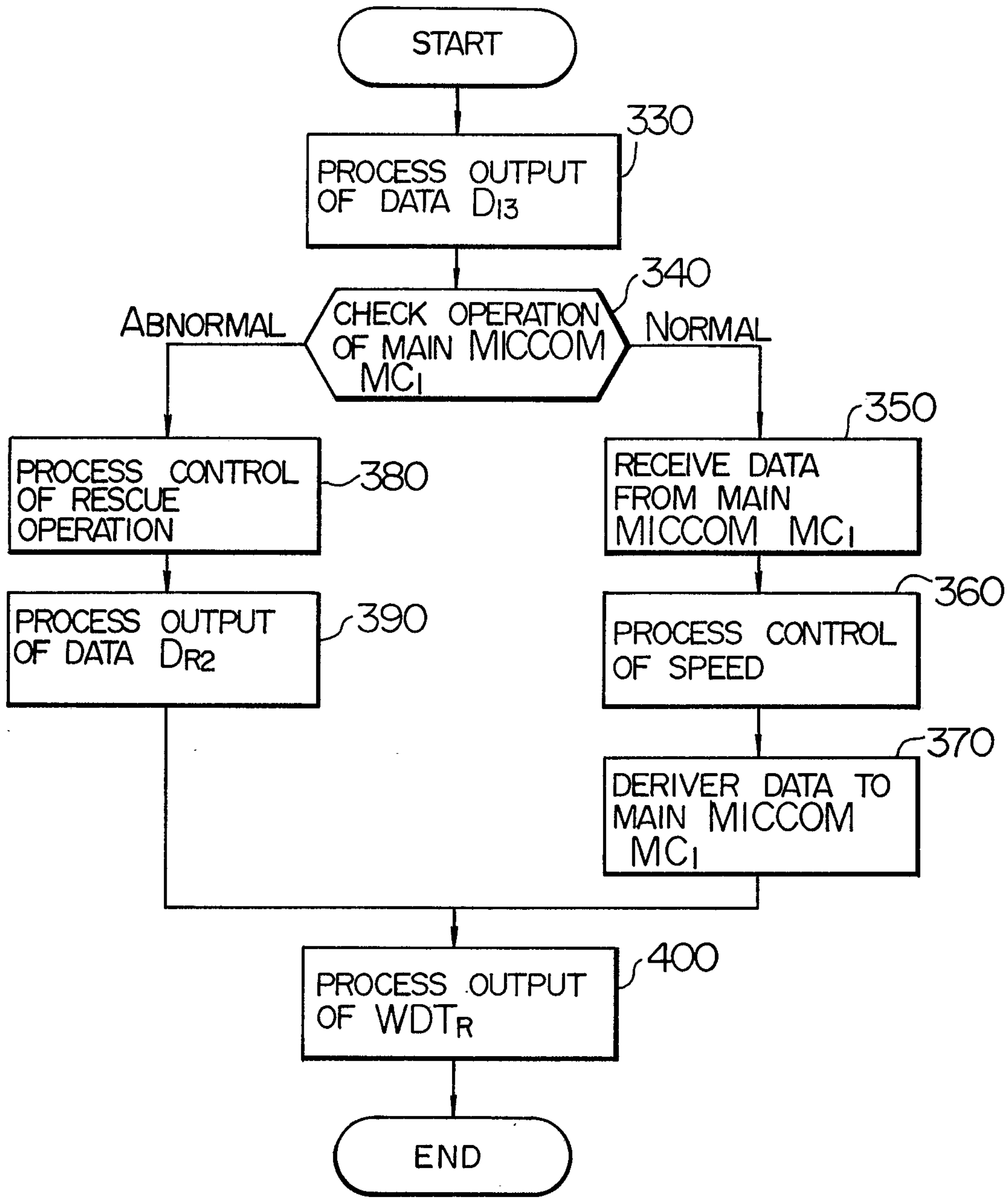
FIG. 13



F I G. 14


START
PROCESS INPUT OF DATA D_{12} AND D_{13}
250
CHECK OPERATION OF SUB-MICCOM MC_R
260
ABNORMAL
NORMAL
RECEIVE DATA FROM SUB-MICCOM MC_R
270
PROCESS CONTROL OF RESCUE OPERATION
300
PROCESS CONTROL OF NORMAL OPERATION
280
DELIVER DATA TO SUB-MICCOM MC_R
290
PROCESS OUTPUT OF DATA D_{14} AND D_{15}
310
PROCESS OUTPUT OF WDT_1
320
END

F I G. 15


START
PROCESS OUTPUT OF DATA D13
330
CHECK OPERATION OF MAIN MICCOM MC1
340
ABNORMAL
NORMAL
PROCESS CONTROL OF RESCUE OPERATION
380
PROCESS OUTPUT OF DATA DR2
390
RECEIVE DATA FROM MAIN MICCOM MC1
350
PROCESS CONTROL OF SPEED
360
DERIVER DATA TO MAIN MICCOM MC1
370
PROCESS OUTPUT OF WDTR
400
END

F I G. 16

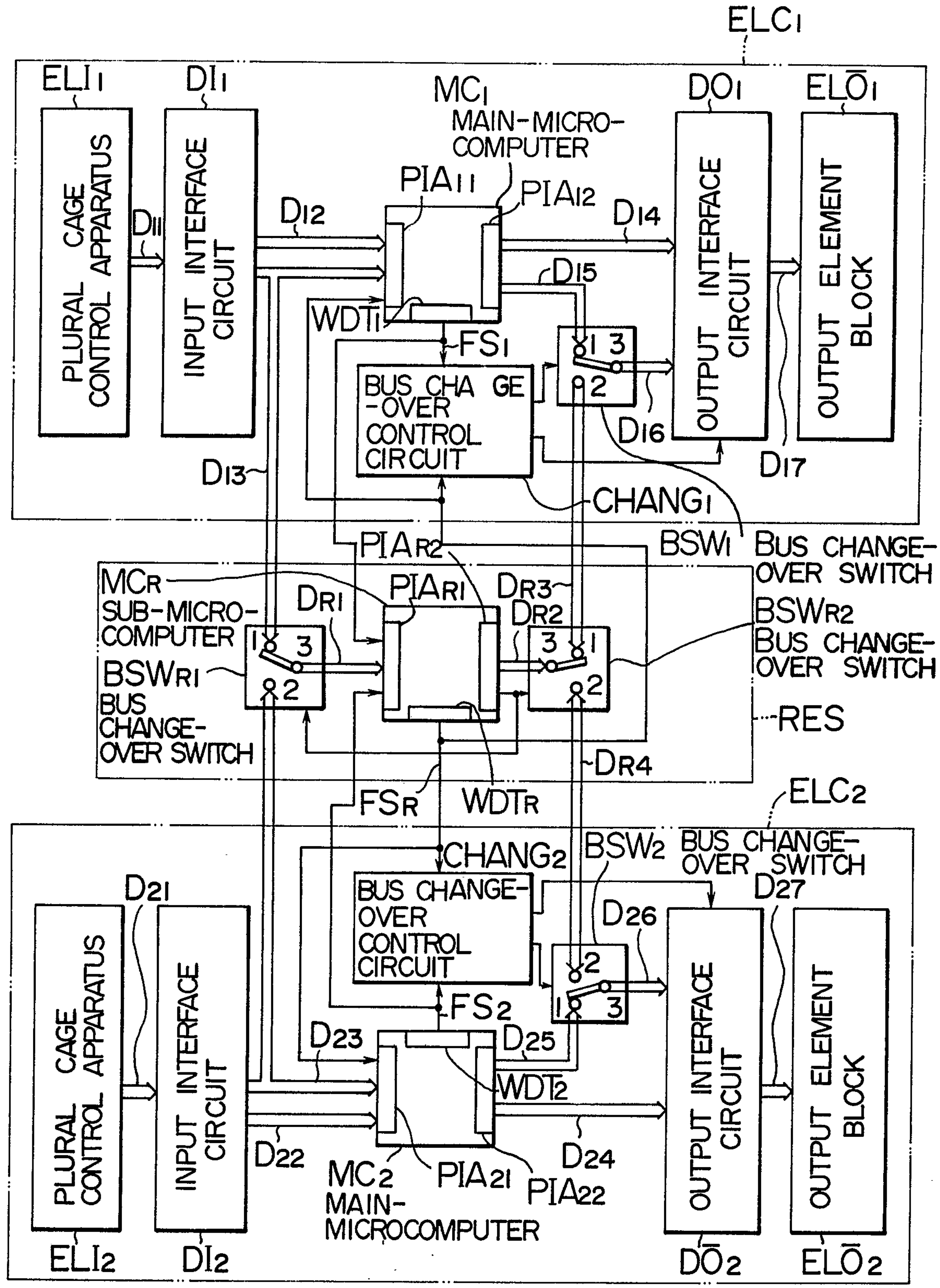

ELC1
ELI1
DI1
MC1
MAIN-MICRO-COMPUTER
DO1
ELO1
PLURAL CAGE CONTROL APPARATUS
D11
INPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
D12
PIA11
PIA12
D14
OUTPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
OUTPUT ELEMENT BLOCK
D15
WDT1
FS1
BUS CHA GE -OVER CONTROL CIRCUIT
D16
D17
D13
CHANG1
PIAR2
BSW1
BUS CHANGE-OVER SWITCH
MCR
SUB-MICRO-COMPUTER
PIAR1
DR1
DR3
DR2
BSWR2
BUS CHANGE-OVER SWITCH
BSWR1
BUS CHANGE-OVER SWITCH
RES
DR4
FSR
WDTR
ELC2
CHANG2
BSW2
BUS CHANGE-OVER SWITCH
D21
BUS CHANGE-OVER CONTROL CIRCUIT
D27
D26
PLURAL CAGE CONTROL APPARATUS
INPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
FS2
D23
D25
WDT2
OUTPUT INTERFACE CIRCUIT
OUTPUT ELEMENT BLOCK
D22
D24
MC2
MAIN-MICROCOMPUTER
PIA21
PIA22
ELI2
DI2
DO2
ELO2

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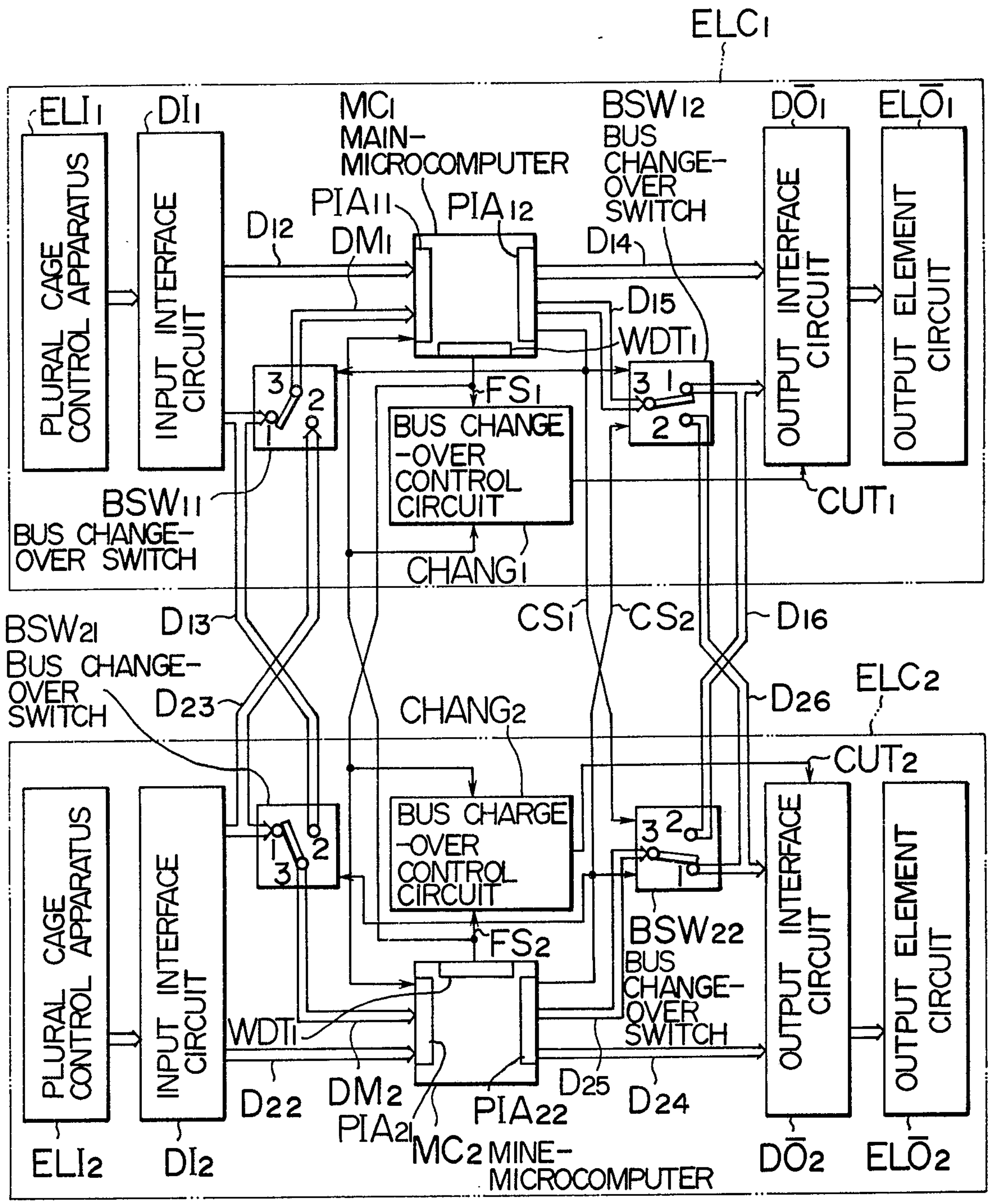
FIG. 17



SPECIFICATION

Apparatus for controlling rescue operation of elevator

This invention relates to an apparatus for controlling the rescue operation of an elevator.

The elevator is the only means of vertical transportation which is conveniently used by people ranging from infants to the aged. Since the elevator cage is moved in the vertical direction, if an abnormality occurs in its control apparatus, there arises an unhappy probability that the passengers may be injured. The safety of the passengers is therefore the most important requirement imposed on the control apparatus for the elevator. Accordingly, when an abnormality is detected in an elevator system at operation, the cage is stopped immediately at any level so as to secure the safety of the passengers. This unexpected stop may sometimes brings the elevator cage into an intermediate position between floors. In that case, the passengers are forced to be confined in the cage for a long time. Therefore, it is necessary to rescue the passengers quickly out of the cage.

In the elevator system using a conventional elevator control apparatus comprising, the passengers are rescued by the maintainers' manual operation or by the automatic rescue operation through the minimum function allowable in the system (cf. Japanese Patent Publication No. 47971/78).

With the recent development of microcomputers having high performance, high reliability and low cost, the micro-computerization of numerous industrial machines is in progress. In the field of elevators, too, systems using microcomputers mainly as group supervision apparatuses have been reported and the systems are now under development in which the elevator control apparatus for controlling the individual cages (hereafter referred to for simplicity as cage controller) is micro-computerized.

However, since a microcomputer have one or several semiconductor chips in which component density is very high and every function is concentrated in a very small area, a slightest fault occurring within could bring the microcomputer out of order, collapsing all the normal functions. It is therefore necessary for the elevator system using a microcomputer as described-above to be furnished with another means for securing the safety of passengers.

The abnormality or fault occuring in the group supervision control computer will not always conduce to the confinement of the accidental injury of passengers since in such a case the group supervision control can be stopped. Moreover, the abnormality of the computer can be easily detected by the well-known artifices such as a watchdog timer, parity check etc.

On the other hand, if a fault occurs in the cage controller to control each elevator cage, the failure in an immediate stop may incur an injurious acident. Accordingly, in such a fault it is likely that the cage will be stopped and kept between floors, with the passengers confined within. Since the microcomputer is deprived completely of its functions even if a fault occurring therein is only a local one. Therefore, the prior art computerized elevator system cannot perform a rescue operation as could be effected by the conventional system in which the control apparatus is made up of relay circuits and which uses the most limited functions for the rescue operation.

One object of this invention is to provide a rescue operation control apparatus which can quickly rescue the passengers from the cage of the elevator even when an abnormality occurs in the cage control computer used in the elevator system as a cage control section.

Another object of this invention is to provide a rescue operation control apparatus which can improve the processing speed and functions by controlling the operations of the individual cages by plural function-divided computers and which can rescue the passengers from the cages even when any one of the computers is out of order.

According to one feature of this invention, besides the first computer for controlling the operation of a cage the second computer is provided which has at least a function of controlling the rescue operation associated with the cage and which causes the cage to reach the predetermined floor level for the rescue of the passengers.

According to another feature of this invention, the second computer for rescue operation control shares a part of the cage control function of the first computer with the first computer while the first computer is also provided with a function of controlling the rescue opperation, whereby when one of the computers gets out or order and loses the control of the operation of cage, the other computer serves to control the rescue operation.

Other objects, features and advantages of this invention will be apparent in the following description of the preferred embodiments of this invention, referring to the attached drawings, in which:

Figures 1–13 illustrate one embodiment of this invention:

Figure 1 shows in block diagram the general constitution of an elevator control apparatus;

Figure 2 is the circuit of an input interface;

Figure 3 shows the constitution of a main microcomputer;

Figure 4 is the circuit of an output interface;
Figure 5 is the circuit for controlling the change-over of buses;
Figure 6 is a time shaft for explaining the operation of the circuit shown in Fig. 5;
Figure 7 is the general flow chart for explaining the program of the main microcomputer;
Figure 8 is the general flow chart for explaining the program of the sub-microcomputer;
Figure 9 is a detailed flow chart of a rescue operation processing program;
Figure 10 shows an input/output table for cage call used in the rescue operation control processing;
Figure 11 is an input/output table for the cage position used in the rescue operation control processing;
Figure 12 is an input/output table for door and safety mechanism used in the rescue operation control processing;
Figure 13 is an input/output table for rescue operation used in the rescue operation control processing;
Figures 14 and 15 illustrate another embodiment of this invention:
Figure 14 is the flow chart for explaining the program of the main microcomputer;
Figure 15 is the flow chart for explaining the program of the sub-microcomputer;
Figure 16 shows in block diagram the general constitution of an elevator control apparatus as yet another embodiment of this invention; and
Figure 17 shows in block diagram the general constitution of an elevator control apparatus as further embodiment of this invention.

This invention will now be explained by way of embodiment with the aid of Figs. 1–13. In the first embodiment of this invention, two microcomputers are used and they are referred to for convenience as a main microcomputer (also abbreviated as main MICCOM) and a sub-microcomputer (also abbreviated as sub-MICCOM). However, the distinction between their designations never provides a functional relationship of one to the other, but is only for the facilities of mentioning them, as in the embodiment described later.

In Fig. 1 showing in block diagram the general constitution of an elevator control apparatus as a first embodiment of this invention, ELI_1 is an input element block for entering elevator information, comprising cage call buttons near the sliding door of the elevator shaft, floor selecting buttons in the cage, limit switches, relay contacts and cage position detectors; DI_1 an input interface circuit for converting the input information to signals having voltages suitable for a microcomputer; MI_1 a main MICCOM for controlling the operation of the elevator cage; MC_R a sub-MICCOM for controlling the operation of rescuing the passengers in the cage; DO_1 an output interface circuit for amplifying the outputs of the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R; ELO_1 an output element block comprising lamps, relays etc.; $CHANG_1$ a bus change-over control circuit for switching over the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R; and BSW_1 a bus change-over switch for switching over data buses.

The output element block ELO_1 is a drive apparatus for driving the cages and the lamps etc. according to the control signal processed by the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R. The block ELO_1 itself is well-known and the explanation thereof will not be given here.

The operation of the circuit shown in Fig. 1 is as follows. The information necessary for the control of the cage, that is, information D_{11} consisting of the outputs from the push buttons B_{11}–B_{1n} such as the floor selecting buttons in the cage and the cage call buttons near the sliding door of the elevator shaft, limit switches LMT_{11}–LMT_{1n} such as up and down limit switches, relays RY_1–RY_n for securing safety or switching heavy current, and a detector P for detecting the signal indicating the position of the cage, is sent to the input interface circuit DI_1 to eliminate noise due to the chattering of the relay contacts and to perform a voltage shift. The thus processed outputs are delivered as inputs D_{12} and D_{13} to the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R, respectively. The data D_{13} is used to control the cage and the rescue operation. The data D_{12} and D_{13} is stored in the interior memories of the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R through their associated peripheral interface adapters PIA_{11} and PIA_{R1}. To find out a fault occurring in the sub-MICCOM MC_R, the output signal FS_R of the fault detecting circuit wdt_2 of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is supplied to the adapter PIA_{11} of the main MICCOM MC_1. Also, to check a fault in the main MICCOM MC_1, the fault detecting circuit WDT_1 of the main MICCOM MC_1 is supplied to the adapter PIA_{R1} of the sub-MICCOM MC_R. The data bus D_{18} is used for the data communication between the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R.

The arithmetically processed output of the main MICCOM MC_1 is delivered as data D_{14} and D_{15} through the adapter PIA_{12}. The data D_{14}, having nothing to do with the rescue operation control, is directly supplied to the output interface circuit DO_1. The data D_{15}, associated with the rescue operation control, is supplied to the output interface circuit DO_1 as the data D_{16} when the terminals 1 and 3 of the bus switch BSW_1 are connected with each other. Thus, the data D_{16} in this case is identical with the data D_{15}. It is when the main MICCOM MC_1 is normally operating that the terminals 1 and 3 of the bus switch BSW_1 are connected with each other. When a fault occurs in the main MICCOM MC_1, the terminals 2 and 3 are connected with each other according to the bus change-over signal CHS_1 from the bus change-over control circuit $CHANG_1$. In this case, the data D_{16} is identical with the data D_{R2} from the sub-MICCOM MC_R. That is, when the main MICCOM MC_1 falls in a fault, the bus switch BSW_1 is changed over to connect the terminal 3 with the terminal 1 in place of the terminal 2. Accordingly, the sub-MICCOM MC_R controls the rescue operation.

The bus change-over control circuit $CHANG_1$ receives the output signal FS_1 of the fault detecting circuit WDT_1 in the main MICCOM MC_1 and the output signal FS_R of the fault detecting circuit WDR_R in the sub-MICCOM MC_R, and delivers the bus change-over signal CHS_1. Also, the circuit $CHANG_1$ delivers the signal CUT_1 which inhibits the output of the output interface circuit DO_1 for a predetermined period of time when the main MICCOM MC_1 falls in and recovers from a fault.

The arithmetically processed results from the main and sub-MICCOM MC_1 and MC_R are sent through the output interface circuit DO_1 to the output element block ELO_1, as described above, so that the indicating lamps L_{11}–L_{1n}, the relays R_{11}–R_{1n} and the warning buzzer BZ_1 are actuated and the cage is driven.

It is for the purpose of checking a fault in the sub-MICCOM MC_R that the output signal FS_R of the fault detecting circuit WDT_R of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is supplied to the main MICCOM MC_1. Now let it be assumed that the main MICCOM MC_1 is normally operating and that the sub-MICCOM MC_R is in fault. Then, the main control of the elevator system can be normally performed by means of the main MICCOM MC_1, but there is no backup function of controlling the rescue operation since the sub-MICCOM is now abnormal. If the main MICCOM MC_1 also falls in a fault in this case, the rescue operation becomes impossible after the cage has been stopped in an emergency. It is therefore necessary to cause the main MICCOM to drive the cage to the nearest floor as soon as possible. In such a state as mentioned above, according to this invention, the already registered or new floor calls are ignored and only one of the registered cage calls is adopted which corresponds to the call of the cage to the nearest floor. Then, the cage is moved to the nearest floor and rests there.

The table I given below summarizes various processings to be performed in the case where the main MICCOM MC_1 and/or the sub-MICCOM are in fault.

Table I

MC_1	MC_R	Processings to be performed
○	○	To control cage by MC_1 normally
×	○	To connect terminal 3 with terminal 2 in BSW_1. To control rescue operation by MC_R so that cage is moved to the nearest floor for rescue of passengers and then rest there.
○	×	To start warning buzzer BZ_1 to indicate that MC_1 has fallen in a fault. To ignore floor calls and respond to registered cage call. To rest there with door shut after cage has reached nearest floor.
×	×	To make an emergency stop and remain stationary.

Note: ○...normal operation
×...fault.

In the above table I, serious is the case where both MC_1 and MC_R are in fault since in this state the passengers are confined in the cage. However, the chance that this case may occur, is very small.

Next, concrete examples of the important components of the general circuit shown in Fig. 1 will be explained.

Fig. 2 shows a concrete example of the input interface circuit DI_1 shown in Fig. 1, which serves to eliminate chattering due to the making and breaking of contacts and to shift the input voltage level. The information D_{11} from the contact mechanism is subjected to, for example, voltage division by resistors R_{11} and R_{12} and also to chattering absorption by a delay element consisting of the resistors R_{11} and R_{12} and a capacitor C_1. The signals without chattering are then wave-shaped to be data D_{12} and D_{13}. As shown in Fig. 2, n similar circuits are provided and the outputs of these circuits associated with the rescue operation control constitute the data D_{13} while the outputs of these circuits not associated with the rescue operation control form the data D_{12}. It is for the purpose of decreasing the number of the inputs to the adapter PIA_{R1} of the sub-MICCOM MC_R that the outputs are divided into the data D_{12} and D_{13}.

Fig. 3 shows an example of the main MICCOM MC_1 shown in Fig. 1. The main MICCOM MC_1 comprises a micro-processor MPU_1, a read-only-memory ROM_1 for storing programs therein, a random access memory RAM_1 for storing data therein, an input/output interface circuit DI_1, peripheral interface adapters PIA_{11} and PIA_{12} for serving as interfaces with the input/output interface circuits DI_1 and DO_1, and a fault detecting circuit (watchdog timer) WDT_1. These components are interconnected with one another through data bus DB, address bus AB and control bus CB. The arithmetical processing by the main MICCOM MC_1, necessary for the door control, the direction control, the call control and the acceleration and deceleration control all associated with the operation of an elevator cage, is performed according to predetermined programs. The structure of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is the same as that of the main MICCOM MC_1 and the explanation of the sub-MICCOM is omitted. The term "computer" used in this invention is applied to any device that can have a function of processing data according to the program stored in its memory, and it should be noted that the above described embodiments by no means limit this invention.

Fig. 4 shows a concrete example of the output interface circuit shown in Fig. 1. The output interface circuit DO_1 serves to amplify the outputs of the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R to drive the output elements such as the lamps L_{11}–L_{1n} and the relays R_{11}–R_{1n} and also to inhibit the delivery of unwanted data from the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R. Namely, when the output inhibit signal CUT_1 turns to "1", the "not" circuit NOTD inverts the input "1" to "0" so that the "and" circuit $ANDD_1$–$ANDD_n$ inhibit the data D_{14} and D_{16} from the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R. Accordingly, signals "0" are applied to the gates of the thyristors SCR_1–SCR_n so that the output elements such as the lamps and the relays are not energized. On the other hand, when the output inhibit signal CUT_1 is "0", the operation contrary to the above described one will follow. The gates of the SCR_1–SCR_n directly receive the data D_{14} and D_{16} from the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R to control the elevator cage.

Fig. 5 shows a concrete example of the bus change-over control circuit $CHANG_1$ shown in Fig. 1. The change-over control circuit $CHANG_1$ delivers a change-over signal CHS_1 to the bus switch BSW_1 and the output inhibit signal CUT_1 to the output interface circuit DO_1. The bus change-over signal CHS_1 is generated, as apparent from the table I given above, when the sub-MICCOM MC_R is normal and the main MICCOM MC_1 is in fault. Now, it is assumed that a fault is identified if the outputs FS_1 and FS_R of the fault detecting circuits WDT_1 and WDT_R are "1" and that the normal state is assured if the outputs FS_1 and FS_R are "0". Then, the "and" circuit $ANDC_2$ makes a logical product when FS_1 = "1" (indicating that MC_1 is in fault) and FS_R = "0" (indicating that MC_R is normal), so that the bus change-over signal CHS_1 is "1", changing over the bus switch BSW_1 to connect the terminal 3 with the terminal 2.

On the other hand, when both the MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_R are in fault, that is, FS_1 = "1" and FS_R = "1", the "and" circuit $ANDC_1$ makes a logical product "1" which is delivered as the output inhibit signal CUT_1 through the "or" circuit OR_1. Accordingly, the output inhibit signal CUT_1 is "1" in this case. Also, the output inhibit signal CUT_1 is delivered for a desired period of time when the bus change-over signal CHS_1 is changed from "0" to "1" or from "1" to "0". Thus, when the buses are changed over, the operation of the cage is stopped (as in an emergency) by inhibiting the output of the output interface circuit DO_1, so that the disorder due to the change-over may be prevented. For this purpose, there is provided a circuit for delivering a pulse having a predetermined duration, comprising exclusive "or" circuits EOR_1, EOR_2 and EOR_3, a resistor R_T and a capacitor C_T. The duration is determined by controlling the values of the resistor R_T and the capacitor C_T and set equal to the time required for the emergency stop of the cage. The exclusive "or" circuits EOR_1–EOR_3 make use of C·MOS IC's.

Fig. 6 (A), (B), (C) and (D) is the time chart for the bus change-over control circuit $CHANG_1$ shown in Fig. 5. In Fig. 6 (A), (B), (C) and (D), the instants indicated at ⓐand ⓑare respectively the moments when the main MICCOM MC_1 falls in a fault and recovers from a fault. Namely, the input FS_1 becomes "1" at the instant ⓐand simultaneously the bus change-over signal CHS_1 becomes "1" and thereafter the output inhibit signal CUT_1 continues to be "1" for a predetermined period T of time. The input FS_1 is changed to "0" at the instant ⓐand the bus change-over signal CHS_1 is simultaneously changed to "0" and thereafter the output inhibit signal CUT_1 continues to "1" for the predetermined period T.

Next, programs for the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R will be explained with the aid of Figs. 7 and 8.

Fig. 7 is a flow chart illustrating an example of the program for the main MICCOM MC_1, the program being synchronously executed at a period of several tens of milliseconds.

First, whether there is the signal FS_R indicating a fault in the main MICCOM MC_1, is checked (step 110). If there is no signal FS_R, the warning buzzer BZ_1 is turned off (step 120). On the other hand, if the signal FS_R is present, the buzzer BZ_1 is turned on (step 130) and then all the floor calls are ignored (step 140). After the above processing has been completed, the input data D_{12} and D_{13} is processed in the step 150. Next, in the step 160, the respective operational control for the cage, such as the door control, the direction control and the acceleration or deceleration control, are processed. The results of the processing of the operational controls is obtained in the step 170, the data D_{14} and D_{16} being delivered. Finally in the step 180, a pulse is delivered to the fault detecting circuit WDT_1 which serves to detect a fault in the main

MICCOM MC_1. The circuit WDT_1 judges that the main MICCOM MC_1 is in fault, unless such a pulse is received at a constant period.

Fig. 8 is a flow chart illustrating an example of the processing program for the sub-MICCOM MC_R. This program is also synchronously executed at a period of several tens of milliseconds. First, the input processing of the data D_{13} necessary for the control of the rescue operation is executed (step 210) and then the processing of the control of the rescue operation is executed on the basis of the above processed data (step 220). Next, in the step 230, the hitherto processed result is delivered as output data D_{R2}. Finally in the step 240, a pulse is delivered to the fault detecting circuit WDT_R so as to detect a fault in the sub-MICCOM MC_R, and this program is completed. This program is continuously executed so long as the sub-MICCOM MC_R is normal. However, since the bus switch BSW_1 selects the terminal 1 when the main MICCOM MC_1 is normal, then the output of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is not supplied to the output interface circuit DO_1. If the main MICCOM MC_1 falls in a fault, the bus switch BSW_1 selects the terminal 2 so that the output of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is supplied to the output interface circuit DO_1 to execute a rescue operation.

The processing of the rescue operation control (step 220 in Fig. 8) in which the features of this invention is embodied, will be described in detail below.

Fig. 9 is a flow chart concretely illustrating the processing of the control of the rescue operation and Figs. 10–13 are the tables of the input and output of the information used in the flow chart shown in Fig. 9. The following description refers to the reference symbols used in Figs. 10–13, concentrated mainly on the flow chart in Fig. 9.

First, the condition of the main MICCOM MC_1 at operation is checked. When the main MICCOM MC_1 is normally operating, the rescue operation commanding signals DD and DU are erased (step 220T) and the braking signal BK is established. The sub-MICCOM MC_R does not perform the processing of the rescue operation control.

On the other hand, if the main MICCOM MC_1 falls in a fault, the safety signal SAFE as the signal for assuring the safety of operating the cage is checked (step 220B) and if the safety signal SAFE is detected, the following rescue operation control processing is performed.

Namely, the stop signal STOP indicating whether the cage is at the floor level, that is, at the same level with any floor, is checked (step 220C). If the cage is in an intermediate position between floors, a call for moving the cage to the nearest floor is generated (step 220p). The processing of direction selection is performed (step 220E) according to the position of the cage and the generated call. The rescue operation commanding signals DD and DU are established (step 220F) and the breaking signal BK is erased, so that the cage is ready for an immediate operation (step 220G). For example, in the case where the cage is moved downward in a rescue operation, the downward rescue operation commanding signal DD is made to take "1" and the upward rescue operation commanding signal DU is rendered to be "0". In this way, the rescue operation is started and the cage is moved slowly.

As soon as the case has approached a desired floor level, that is, the stop signal STOP has been detected in the step 220C, the rescue operation commanding signals DD and DU are both erased (step 220H) and instead the breaking signal BK is established (step 220I) so as to stop the movement of the cage. Then, whether the door of the cage is open or not, is checked (step 220J). If the door is closed (CLS = 1), the rescue completion signal END is checked (step 220p). If the rescue operation is not yet completed, the step 220R is reached. In the step 220R, the door open commanding signal OP is established. Then, the 15 sec timer starting signal T15S for automatically closing the door 15 sec after the opening of the door, is established (step 220S). Under this condition, the door will be opened if the door opening button OP is pushed while the rescue completion signal END is detected in the step 220p.

In the step 220J, when the door is completely opened (OLS = 1), the 15 sec timer deenergizing signal T15F is checked (step 220K). If the signal T15F is not detected, the rescue completion signal END is erased (step 220O). If, on the other hand, the signal T15F is detected, it is judged that the rescue has been completed, that is, the passengers has been rescued from the cage for the period of 15 sec during which the door is open, and the operation of closing the door is started (step 220L). Then, the 15 sec timer starting signal T15S is erased (step 220M) and the rescue completion signal END is established (step 220N). By repeating similar processings, the cage can always be moved to the nearest floor level and the passengers in the cage can be quickly liberated.

As described above, according to this invention,, the passengers can be quickly rescued even when the computer for controlling the operation of the cage falls in a fault and when the cage is stopped in the intermediate position between floors. In the above embodiment, the sub-MICCOM MC_R is so designed as to perform only the processing of the rescue operation control. Therefore, in the case where the amount of the input and the output information to be processed is small, just as in the present case, the sub-MICCOM may be a small-capacity microcomputer such as a one-chip microcomputer. Moverover, in the above embodiment, the output data is inhibited when the main MICCOM is in fault and when the change-over from main MICCOM to sub-MICCOM is performed. Accordingly, the elevator system can be prevented from falling into a dangerous condition due to abnormal data.

Another embodiment of this invention will now be described with the aid of Figs. 14 and 15. This embodiment is a variation of the embodiment desired above in which the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R perform their processings according to the flow charts shown in Figs. 7 and 8.

In the above described embodiment, the sub-MICCOM MC_R has only the function of controlling the rescue operation when the main MICCOM is in fault. Therefore, the sub-MICCOM is superfluous when the main MICCOM is normal.

In another embodiment, the sub-MICCOM MC_R shares the function of controlling the operation of the cage with the main MICCOM MC_1 so as to diminish the processing burden on the main MICCOM MC_1, that is, to improve the processing ability thereof. In that case, however, the control of the operation of the cage becomes impossible even when the sub-MICCOM MC_1 falls in a fault, so that the passengers are confined in the cage. Therefore, in this embodiment, to avoid such an accident, the main MICCOM MC_1 is also provided with a function of controlling the rescue operation.

For example, the main MICCOM MC_1 shares the processings of controlling the cage call, the floor call, the opening and closing of the door, and the cage operation command while the sub-MICCOM MC_R shares the processing of controlling the acceleration and deceleration of the cage (i.e. generating the speed instruction).

The data communication between the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R is through the data bus D_{18} shown in Fig. 1.

Figs. 14 and 15 show the flow charts of the processings by the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM in the above described function sharing system.

Fig. 14 is the flow chart of the processing by the main MICCOM MC_1, in which the steps 250, 310 and 320 are respectively the same as the steps 150, 170 and 180 in Fig. 7 and the description of the steps 250, 310 and 320 is omitted.

In the step 260, the operating condition of the sub-MICCOM MC_R is checked and if it is normal, the data processed by the sub-MICCOM MC_R, such as the acceleration control data, is received through the data bus D_{18} (step 270). The processing of the cage operation control, shared by the main MICCOM MC_1, is performed (step 250) and then the data to the sub-MICCOM MC_R, such as the operation starting signal and the deceleration starting signal, is transmitted.

On the other hand, if the sub-MICCOM is in fault, the processing of the rescue operation control, which is the same as the processing shown in Fig. 9 and programmed in the main MICCOM MC_1, is performed (step 300).

Fig. 15 is the flow chart of the processing by the sub-MICCOM MC_R, in which the steps 330, 380, 390 and 400 are respectively the same as the steps 210, 220, 230 and 240 in Fig. 8.

In the step 340, the operating condition of the main MICCOM MC_1 is checked and if it is normal, the processing of the speed control, shared by the sub-MICCOM MC_R, is performed (step 360). The processing necessary for the data communication between the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R (steps 350 and 370) is inserted before and after the speed control processing step 360.

If, on the other hand, the main MICCOM MC_1 is in fault, the same rescue operation control processings as in Figs. 8 and 9 are performed.

As described just above, in this embodiment, the main MICCOM MC_1 and the sub-MICCOM MC_R share the function of operating the cage with each other. Accordingly, the processing burden on the main MICCOM MC_1 can be diminished so that the processing speed and ability can be improved. Further, even though the sub-MICCOM MC_R is disabled in a fault, the rescue operation control can be performed so that the desired purpose can be attained.

Figs. 16 and 17 show in block diagram the general constitutions of elevator control apparatuses as other embodiments of this invention.

In the embodiment shown in Fig. 16, a rescue operation control apparatus RES is shared by plural cage control apparatuses ELC_1 and ELC_2. Therefore, bus switches BSW_{R1} and BSW_{R2} are added to change over the cage control apparatuses ELC_1 and ELC_2 depending on which one of the cages should be subjected to the rescue operation. Further, two fault detecting signals FS_1 and FS_2 are received by the sub-MICCOM MC_R so as to judge which one of the main MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_2 of the cage control apparatuses ELC_1 and ELC_2 is in fault. The change-over of the bus switches BSW_1 and BSW_2 by detecting the fault of the cage control apparatus ELC_1 ELC_2 depending on the signal FS_1 or FS_2, can be easily performed according to the stored program. The other configuration of the circuit in Fig. 16 is the same as the corresponding parts of the circuit shown in Fig. 1. The reference symbols attached to the constituents of the cage control apparatus ELC_1 are the same as those attached to the corresponding components of the apparatus ELC shown in Fig. 1. The symbolism for the cage control apparatus ELC_2 can be obtained simply by substituting "2" for the subscript "1" in case of a single subscript component and for only the anterior subscript "1" in case of a double subscript component, e.g., DI_1 to DI_2, DO_1 to DO_2, PIA_{11} to PIA_{21}, and PIA_{12} to PIA_{22}.

With this embodiment shown in Fig. 16 with the rescue operation control apparatus RES shared by the plural cage control apparatuses, the cost of the whole system can be lowered. However, since the number of the bus switches used in this embodiment is double the number of the bus switches used in the circuit shown in Fig. 1, the reliability of the whole system is lowered. The other effects are the same as those obtained with the circuit shown in Fig. 1.

In Fig. 17 showing yet another embodiment of this invention, the main MICCOM of one cage control apparatus can also serve as the sub-MICCOM of another cage control apparatus for controlling the rescue operation. Namely, the cage control apparatuses ELC_1 and ELC_2 are connected crosswise with respect to the input and output signal and the bus change-over signals, with each other so that the main MICCOM MC_1 of the cage control apparatus ELC_1 may serve also as the sub-MICCOM of the cage control apparatus ELC_2 and that the main MICCOM MC_2 of the cage control apparatus ELC_2 may serve also as the sub-MICCOM of the cage control apparatus ELC_1. In this case, two, four bus switches BSW_{11}, BSW_{12}, BSW_{21} and BSW_{22} are used just as in the embodiment shown in Fig. 16. Each of the main MICCOM's MC_1 and MC_2 has memories for the programs and the data described with Figs. 9–13 and is started by corresponding one of the fault detecting signals FS_1 and FS_2.

With this embodiment shown in Fig. 17, there is no need for the separate provision of sub-MICCOM's for the rescue operation control since the main MICCOM of one cage control apparatus serve also as the sub-MICCOM of the other cage control apparatus. Accordingly, the cost of the system in Fig. 17 can be lower than that of the system shown in Fig. 1 or Fig. 16. However, the idea of this embodiment cannot be applied to the case where only one elevator cage is used. Moreover, since numerous bus switches are used just as in the embodiment in Fig. 16, the reliability of the whole system is lowered. The other effects are the same as those obtained with the embodiment shown in Fig. 16.

As described above, according to this invention, passengers can be quickly rescued even when the computer used in the cage control apparatus falls in a fault and therefore the elevator system equipped with the rescue operation control apparatus according to this invention, can be said to be much improved with respect to the safety of the passengers.

CLAIMS

1. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, having an elevator cage avaliable at plural floors, a first computer for processing the control of the operation of said elevator cage by receiving at least the information about said cage, and a drive apparatus for driving said cage according to the control signal sent from said first computer, wherein said rescue operation control apparatus comprises a means for detecting an abnormality occurring in said first computer; a means for inhibiting the control of the operation of said cage by said first computer in response to the signal from said abnormality detecting means; and a second computer for controlling the rescue operation of said cage by receiving at least the information about the position of said cage when said first computer is in fault.

2. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said second computer is provided with a means for bringing said cage exactly to a floor level in said rescue operation.

3. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said cage operation control inhibiting means includes a change-over means which receives the control signals from said first and second computers and delivers said control signal from said second computer to said drive apparatus in response to said signal from said abnormality detecting means.

4. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said cage operation control inhibiting emans includes a means for interrupting said control signals for a predetermined period of time in response to said signal from said abnormality detecting means.

5. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said apparatus further comprises a means for communicating data between said first and second computers, and said second computer includes a means for sharing the processing of the cage operation by said first computer with said first computer.

6. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, comprising an elevator cage available at plural floors; a first and a second computer for receiving at least the information about said cage and for sharing the processing of controlling the operation of said cage; drive apparatus for driving said cage according to the control signals from said first and second computers; a first detecting means for detecting an abmormality occurring in said first computer; a second detecting means for detecting an abnormality occurring in said second computer; a means for inhibiting the control of the operation of said cage in response to the signals from said first and second detecting means; a means provided in said first computer for controlling

the rescue operation of said cage by receiving the information about the position of said cage when at least said second computer is abnormal; and a means provided in said second computer for controlling the rescue operation of said cage by receiving the information about the position of said cage when at least said first computer is abnormal.

7. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, having plural elevator cages each available at plural floors, computers provided respectively for said cages for processing the control of the operations of said cages by receiving the information about said cages, and driving apparatuses for driving said cages according to the associated control signals from said computers, wherein said rescue operation control apparatus comprises means for detecting abnormalities occurring in said respective computers; means for inhibiting the controls of the operations of said cages by the computers in which abnormalities are detected; and computers which receive the information about the positions of the cages whose operations are inhibited and control the rescue operations of these cages whose operations are inhibited.

8. A rescue operation control apparatus for an elevator system, having plural elevator cages each available at plural floors, computers provided respectively for said cages for processing the control of the operations of said cages by receiving the information about said cages, and driving apparatuses for driving said cages according to the associated control signals from said computers, wherein said rescue operation control apparatus comprises means for detecting abmormalities occurring in said respective computers; means for inhibiting the controls of the operations of said cages by the computers in which abnormalities are detected; means for supplying the information about the positions of the cages whose operation controls are inhibited, to the computers for controlling the operations of the cages whose operation controls are not inhibited; and means provided in said computers of said cages whose operation controls are not inhibited, for controlling the rescue operation of said cages whose operation controls are inhibited.

9. A rescue operation control apparatus substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figs. 1 to 13, or Fig. 16 or Fig. 17 of the accompanying drawings.

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