

Automatic Garage Door Opener and Garage Door Safety & Maintenance Guide

Garage Door System Safety - An Automatic Decision

A garage door is the largest moving object in the home. They are often operated by electric door openers. Proper installation, operation, and maintenance and testing are necessary to provide safe, trouble-free operation. An improperly adjusted garage door or automatic opener can exert deadly force when the door closes. This could lead to serious injury or death from being hit by a closing garage door or from being trapped under the door.

Safety is Everyone's Business

A few simple precautions can protect your family and friends from potential harm. Please take a few minutes to read the following safety and maintenance information. Refer to your garage door and opener's manual for details specific to the model you own. Then check the operation of your garage door and automatic opener.

Garage Door Openers are not Toys

Do Not stand or walk under a moving door! Do not let children or adults play "beat the door". It is dangerous and can result in serious injury or death. Adults should set a good example. Know how to use the emergency release, in case someone is pinned by the door.

Do Not let children play with or use the transmitters or remote controls. Always place and store them out of the reach of children.

The pushbutton wall control should be out of the reach of children (at least 5 feet from the floor) and away from all moving parts. Mount and use the button where you can clearly see the moving garage door.

Teach Your Children About Garage Door and Opener Safety

Garage door openers are not toys. Careless operation and allowing children to play with or use garage door opener controls can lead to tragic results. Discuss garage door safety with your children. Explain the danger of being trapped under the door.

When using the pushbutton or transmitter, keep the door in sight until it completely stops moving. Teach children never to play under or near an open garage door.

Teach children to keep their hands and fingers clear of section joints, hinges, tracks, springs and other door parts. Contact with a moving door or its hardware could cause serious injury. These injuries can also happen with garage doors that don't have automatic openers.

Routine Maintenance Can Prevent Tragedies

Take a few minutes to inspect and test your complete garage door system. Make monthly inspection and testing a part of your regular routine. Safety is everyone's business. Make garage door and garage door opener safety automatic in your home.

Monthly Maintenance Checklist

Garage Door Opener

- Reversal Test
- Force Setting Test
- Additional Safety Devices

Garage Door

- Visual Inspection - Springs, Rollers, Pulleys, Cables, and Track
- Lubrication
- Door Balance

Consult owner's manual for additional recommended maintenance for your models of door and opener.

Testing and Maintaining the Garage Door Opener

There are routine safety and maintenance steps that you should follow once a month. Review your owner's manual for the door opener. If you do not have an owners manual, look for the opener model number on the back of the power unit and request a manual from the manufacturer.

Reversal Test

Make sure your opener has a reversing feature. If a reversing feature is not present, it should be replaced. Garage door openers manufactured after January 1, 1993 are required by federal law to have advanced safety features which comply with the latest U.L. 325 standards: Contact your manufacturer or installer for additional information.

Test the reversing feature every month.

- First, test the balance of the door (see "Testing and Maintaining The Garage Door."). If the door is properly balanced, then proceed.
- With the door fully open, place a 1-1/2" thick piece of wood (a 2"x4" laid flat) on the floor in the center of the door.

- Push the transmitter or wall button to close the door. The door must reverse when it strikes the wood. (Note that the bottom part of "*one piece doors*" must be rigid so that the door will not close without reversing.)
- If the door does not reverse, have it repaired or replaced. Have a qualified individual adjust, repair or replace the opener or door.

Force Setting Test

Test the force setting of your garage door opener by holding the bottom of the door as it closes. If the door does not reverse readily, the force may be excessive and need adjusting. See your owner's manual for details on how to make the adjustment. Test the reversing feature after any adjustment.

Additional Safety Devices

Many garage door openers can be equipped with additional safety devices. Consider adding a photo eye or edge sensor as an extra measure of safety to prevent against entrapment. Keep in mind that adding more safety devices will not make an old opener meet current U.L. standards.

Make sure the additional safety devices, such as photoeyes or edge sensors, are properly installed and adjusted (see owner's manual).

Testing and Maintaining the Garage Door

Perform routine maintenance steps once a month. Review your owner's manual for the garage door. If you don't have a manual, look for the model number on the back of the door, or check the lock handle, hinges, or other hardware for the manufacturer's name and request a manual from the manufacturer.

Visual Inspection

Look at the garage door springs, cables, rollers, pulleys, and other door hardware for signs of wear. If you suspect problems, have a qualified person make repairs.

Warning - Springs are under high tension. Only qualified persons should adjust them

Garage door springs, cables, brackets, and other hardware attached to the springs, are under very high tension and, if handled improperly, can cause serious injury. Only a qualified professional or a mechanically experienced person carefully following the manufacturer's instructions should adjust them. The torsion springs (the springs above the door) should only be adjusted by a professional. Do not attempt to repair or adjust the torsion springs yourself.

A restraining cable or other device should be installed on the extension spring (the spring along the side of the door) to help contain the spring if it breaks.

Never remove, adjust or loosen the screws on the bottom brackets of the door. These brackets are connected to the spring by the lift cable and are under extreme tension.

Lubrication

Regularly lubricate the moving parts of the door. However, do not lubricate plastic parts such as plastic rollers and plastic idler bearings. Consult the door owner's manual for the manufacturer's recommendation.

Door Balance

Periodically test the balance of your door.

- Start with the door closed
- If you have a garage door opener, use the release mechanism so you can operate the door by hand when doing this test
- You should be able to lift the door smoothly and with little resistance. It should stay open around three or four feet above the floor. If it does not, it is out of adjustment. Have it adjusted by a qualified service person.

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This important information is provided by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Safety Council and the Industry Coalition for Automatic Garage Door Opener Safety.