

Garage door opener safety – An automatic decision

A garage door is the largest moving object in the home. An improperly adjusted garage door opener can exert deadly force when the door closes – which could lead to entrapment of children or adults and subsequent injury or death from asphyxiation.

Safety is Everyone's Business

Automatic garage door openers are installed in millions of households. Proper installation, operation, maintenance and testing of the garage door and automatic opener are necessary to provide a safe, trouble-free product. An improperly adjusted garage door opener can put forth a deadly force when the door closes. This could lead to serious injury or death from being hit by a closing garage door or from becoming trapped under the door.

Careless operation and allowing children to play with or use garage door opener controls are dangerous situations that can lead to tragic results. A few simple precautions can protect your family and friends from potential harms. Please take a few minutes to read the following maintenance and safety tips. Then check the operation of your garage door and opener to ensure they function in a safe and trouble-free manner.

Precautions and Warnings

- Do not stand or walk under a moving door! Do not let children play "beat the door." It is very dangerous and can result in serious injury or death. Adults should set a good example.
- Keep transmitters and remote controls out of reach of children. Do not let children play with or use the transmitters or remote controls.
- The push button wall control should be out of 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 closing garage door.
- Teach your children about the garage door safety.
- Discuss garage door safety with your children. Explain the danger of being trapped under the door. Do not let children play with or use the pushbutton or transmitter.
- When using the pushbutton or transmitter, keep the door in sight until it completely closes. Teach children to never play under or near an open garage door. Do not allow children to run under a closing door.

Testing the Opener

Make sure your opener has a reversing feature and test the reversing feature every month. With the door open, place a 1½ inch thick piece of wood, laid flat, on the floor in the door's path at approximately the center of the door. While a 1½ piece of wood is best, if you don't have one, use a 2x4 laid flat. Test the balance of the door, as discussed on the back page, before performing the reversal test.

Push the control button to close the door. 'The door opener must reverse and open the door when it strikes the wood. If the opener does not reverse, have it repaired or replaced. Also consider

replacement of the garage door opener if it is an older model. Have a qualified individual adjust, repair or replace the parts.

Test the force setting of your garage door opener by holding up the bottom of the door as it closes. If the door does not reverse readily, the force is excessive and needs adjusting. Your garage door opener owner's manual will explain how to adjust the force sensitivity. A qualified individual should adjust it. To avoid entrapment, be sure to perform the 1 ½ inch reversing test after any repairs or adjustment are made to the garage door or opener.

Many garage door openers can be equipped with accessory safety devices. Consider adding an electric eye or edge sensor as an extra measure of safety to protect against entrapment.

Routine Maintenance Can Prevent Tragedies

There are routine maintenance steps that should follow once a month. Review your owner's manual for both the door and door opener. If you don't have the owner's manuals, contact the manufacturers) Look for the opener model number on the back of the power unit.

Look at the garage door springs, cables, rollers, pulleys and other door hardware for signs of wear. If you suspect any problems, have a qualified person make repairs. The springs and related hardware are under high tension and can cause severe injury when handled improperly.

Warning - springs are under high tension. Only qualified individuals should adjust them.

Rollers and hinges of a garage door require periodic lubrication. Use spray silicone or lightweight household oil according to the instructions in your owner's manual.

Periodically test the balance of your door. Start with your door closed. Disconnect the garage door opener release mechanism so you can operate the door by hand. You should be able to lift the door smoothly and with little resistance. It should stay open around three to four feet above the floor. If it doesn't, it is out of balance. Have it adjusted by a professional.