

Your garage vehicle door may be the largest moving object in your home and could weigh up to 400 pounds. For your safety, make sure it's in good condition.

Balance

Overhead garage doors have gravity to deal with. In the absence of some type of balancing mechanism, the door would slam shut as soon as you let go of it and some would be too heavy for you to open.

Older garage doors may employ a weight and pulley system to balance the weight of the door, however virtually all modern systems use springs. Regardless of the method used, the door should balance. If you open the garage door about half way and let go, it should balance there.

Spring Failure

The springs used to balance the weight of the door are under enormous stress. If a spring were to break, flying pieces of metal could cause serious injury. Modern spring systems incorporate safety features to contain flying metal in the event of a spring failure. For example, extension springs should have a cable running down the middle of the spring to contain the spring upon failure.

If you are not sure whether your garage door spring system has all of the modern safety features, it should be serviced and inspected by a garage door specialist. Attempting to service the spring system yourself can be very dangerous.

Automatic Opener

Automatic door openers are not a replacement for a properly balanced door. The opener is not powerful enough to lift the entire weight of the door. The opener works with the help of the springs or counter balance system.

Auto Reverse

An automatic garage door opener should stop and reverse on meeting an obstruction. Many systems manufactured prior to 1982 may stop but not reverse. These older systems should be upgraded. This is not about protecting your car, it's about protecting people, especially children and even your pets.

Electric Eye

Today, some form of external entrapment protection is required. An electric eye is the most common system used. The electric eye is mounted 5 to 6 inches off the floor and senses objects in its path. If your garage door opener does not have an electric eye system, you may be able to upgrade it without replacing the entire system.

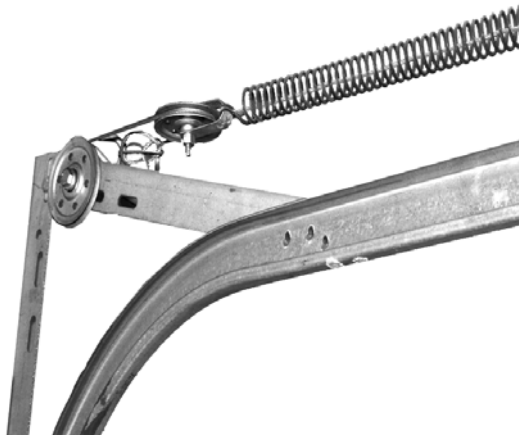
- **Test the Electric Eye:** As the garage door is closing, interrupt the beam from the electric eye with your hand. Make sure you are not standing in the path of the door just in case the system is not working. The door should stop and reverse.
- **Test the Auto-Reverse:** There are several different suggested protocols for testing the garage door auto-reverse. Here's one you can try. Place a roll of paper towel on the ground in the middle of the vehicle door opening. Activate the door so it closes on the roll of paper towel. If the roll of paper towel is squashed before the door auto-reverses, have the door serviced. Most experts expect there would be little or no bending of the cardboard tube if the mechanism is adjusted properly.

Emergency Release

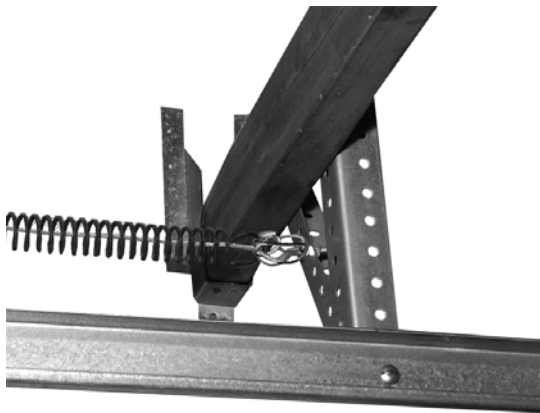
During a power failure the garage door may be impossible to open. Automatic garage door openers have an emergency release to disengage the garage door from the opener. Once disengaged, you can open the door by hand. Make sure you know where this is and how to operate it. It is usually a short rope hanging from the unit. Pulling the rope disengages the door from the automatic door opening mechanism.

A few more pointers:

- **Keep It In Good Shape:** Your garage door may require periodic lubrication and adjustment. An overhead garage door that is poorly maintained may pose a threat to your safety. Hiring a garage door expert to inspect and adjust the system is a good idea.
- **Pinch Hazard:** Sectional overhead garage doors pose a pinch hazard to fingers. Never put your fingers in the space between door sections. To close the door, use the provided handles. Some modern sectional garage doors have a 'pinch proof' design.
- **Security:** The remote control for your automatic opener is like a key to your garage. When you move into a home, you should change the remote control settings just as you would change the locks on your doors. If your automatic opener does not facilitate changing the opener code, it probably also lacks other key safety features of a more modern system. You should consider upgrading.
- **Educate Children:** Children need to know that garage doors are dangerous. Bikes and toys should never be left in the path of the garage door while the door is open. Make sure they know that they should not play with the remote control. Mount the door activation button five feet from the ground.



***Extension Spring with Cable
(Front)***



***Extension Spring with Cable
(Rear)***



Door with Photo Eye

The electric eye is mounted 5 to 6 inches off the floor and senses objects in its path. If your garage door opener does not have an electric eye system, you may be able to upgrade it without replacing the entire system