

SAFETY TIPS FOR GARAGE DOORS

1. Replace Old Springs. Your garage door's springs are arguably the most important and most dangerous part of your door. Springs wear out. When they break, injury can result. If you have an older garage door, have your springs inspected by a professional technician and replaced if needed. If your door has two springs, replace both, even if one is not broken. This will not only prevent any damage caused by the breaking of the second spring, but also keep your door working efficiently.

2. Check Your Cables. Visually inspect the cables that attach the spring system to the bottom brackets on both sides of the door. If these cables are frayed or worn, they are in danger of breaking, which can cause injury. Due to the dangers associated with high spring tension, these cables should be replaced only by a trained technician.

3. Squeaky Springs? Springs can squeak and be noisy. This is caused by normal use and does not necessarily indicate a problem. Before calling a professional service technician, use a spray-on lubricant (recommended especially for garage doors). If the noise persists, call a professional garage door installer for service.

4. A Do-It-Yourselfer, Eh? Installing a garage door can be very dangerous and is not recommended for a novice. DASMA recommends that trained door systems technicians install garage doors. If you attempt the installation by yourself, be sure to follow the manufacturer's installation instructions carefully.

5. Safety Cables. If your garage door has extension springs, you need a safety cable that runs through the spring and secures to the wall or ceiling at each end. When your garage door is down, extension springs are under high tension. If the spring breaks, it may cause injury. A safety cable can keep that broken spring contained. If you have extension springs but do not have a safety cable, call your local dealer for a safety inspection.

6. Struggling Door? If your door does not go up and down smoothly, you may have an unsafe condition. Even older door systems should operate smoothly. If the awkward operation continues when the door is manually operated, you may have a spring system that is out of balance. This can cause premature wear and tear on other important door components. Spring systems are dangerous and should be repaired only by trained professionals.

7. Watch Your Fingers! Every year, many unsuspecting homeowners injure their fingers by placing them between the door sections to pull down on the door. According to DASMA Standard 116, if your door lacks pinch-resistant joints, you should have lift handles or suitable gripping points on the inside and outside of the door. Even if your door has an opener, the door must occasionally be operated manually. Never place your fingers between the door sections. If you manually open or close the door, use the handles or the safe gripping points!

8. Tamper Resistant Brackets. Since the bottom brackets on a garage door are connected to the door's springs, these brackets are under extreme tension. They should be adjusted or loosened only by a trained door systems technician. Many manufacturers now include tamper resistant hardware that prevents loosening of the brackets by a novice.

9. Use the Old Track? When buying a replacement garage door, some homeowners are tempted to save a few dollars by putting the new door on the old track. However, your old track may not fit with your new door, depending on the thickness of your sections, the weight of the door, the headroom required, the location of the garage door opener, and other considerations. The track and sections work together as a system. For maximum performance and long life, you should use the track that is designed for your specific door.

10. Regular Service. Your garage door is probably the largest moving part in your home and is typically used every day. Over time, parts can wear out and break, creating potential safety problems. Although you should provide monthly safety checks and maintenance to your garage door system, an annual visit from a trained door systems technician can keep your door operating safely and smoothly for a long time.

11. Man the Manual. Keep the owner's manuals for your door and opener hanging near the door for easy reference. Every model of door and opener has specific safety instructions unique to that model. Where is your manual?