



The Hidden Dangers of the Garage Door

Many families don't realize the potential threat posed by their automatic garage door. They're often the largest and heaviest piece of moving equipment in a home, and parents frequently let their children operate these doors unsupervised – risking potentially deadly consequences. Children can easily get trapped beneath a door when they try to duck under it, they may get their small hands and arms stuck in the mechanism or they may lower the door accidentally on someone else when confused about how to operate the door.

UL recently received four reports of children being trapped beneath automatic garage doors that were left partially opened. When stopped in this position, trying to open the door using the controls may result in the door initially traveling downward and further injuring the child. Continued or repeated use of the door, particularly when in a panic state, may also not result in the door opening. Make sure you know the steps to keep your kids safe from injury.

What you can do:

1. Leave Doors Fully Open or Fully Closed

UL recommends that automatic garage doors be left only in the fully open or fully closed positions and never partially open or closed. Walking or crawling under a partially opened door creates an entrapment hazard.

“Garage doors weigh as much as 600 pounds and can cause serious injury or even death if they're not used with care,” says Barbara Guthrie, UL vice president of consumer affairs.

“Although UL Listed residential garage door openers manufactured since 1993 have enhanced anti-entrapment safety features, homeowners should not take safety for granted,” Guthrie adds. “If entrapment occurs, remain calm, and call for help from your local fire department.”

Parents should always exercise caution when using automatic garage door operators and follow the safety instructions provided.

2. Read and follow all instructions.

3. Never Let Children Operate the Door - Keep remote control away from children.

4. Never Cross the Path of a Moving Door - Always keep people, pets and objects clear of the moving door until it is completely closed.

5. Test the Door Monthly - The garage door **MUST** reverse on contact with a 1-1/2 inch high object (or a piece of two-by-four lumber laid flat) on the floor. If the door doesn't stop and reverse after contact with the object, disconnect the operator and use the door manually until the operator is replaced or repaired by a qualified technician.

6. Use the Emergency Release Only When the Door is Closed - Use caution when using this release with the door open. Weak or broken springs are capable of increasing the rate of door closure and increasing the risk of severe injury or death.

7. Keep Garage Doors Balanced - An improperly balanced door increases the risk of severe injury or death. Have a qualified service person make repairs to cables, spring assemblies and other hardware.