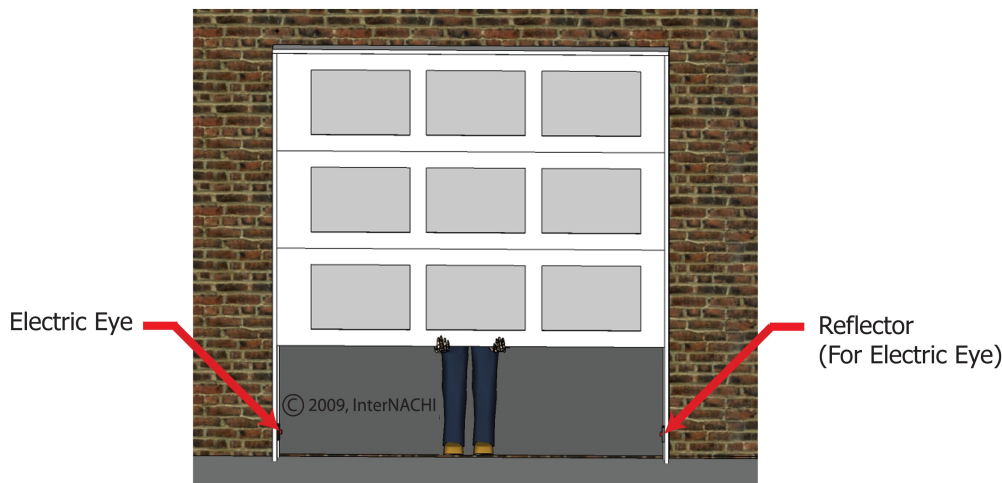


10 Steps to Inspecting a Garage Door Opener

by Ben Gromicko

The garage door is the largest moving object in the house. Its parts are under high tension. All repairs and adjustments should be performed by a trained garage door systems technician. To refer to a technician, send your clients to <http://www.doors.org>. If the garage door appears inoperable, do not attempt to operate the garage door opener.

Auto Reverse Test



#1 Manual Release Handle

Begin inside the garage, with the garage door fully closed. Check for a manual release handle or the means of manually detaching the door from the garage door opener. The handle should be colored red and easy to see. The handle should be accessible and no more than six feet above the garage floor.

#2 Garage Door Panels

From inside the garage, with the door fully closed, check the condition of the door panels. There shouldn't be any cracks, loose pieces, separations or damage.

#3 Warning Labels

From inside the garage, with the door fully closed, look for the following warning labels: (1) A spring warning label attached to the spring assembly, (2) A general warning label attached to the back of a door panel, (3) A warning label attached to the wall in the vicinity of the wall control button and (4) Two warning labels attached to the door in the vicinity of the bottom corner brackets. (Aside note: Some newer doors have tamper-resistant bottom corner brackets that will not require these warning labels.)

#4 Spring and Hardware

With the door still in the closed position, look at the springs for damage. Don't operate the door if a spring is broken. Operating the door with a damage component can cause serious injury or death. Recommend that the door be not used until the damaged spring is replaced by a trained door systems technician. Visually check the door's hinges, brackets and fasteners. If the door has an opener, the door must have an opener reinforcement bracket that is securely attached to the door's top section. The header bracket of the opener rail must be securely attached to the wall or header, using lag bolts or concrete anchors.

#5 Door Operation

Close the door fully. If the door has an opener, pull the manual release to disconnect the door from the opener. Without straining yourself, manually lift and operate the door by grasping the door in a safe place where your fingers cannot be pinched or injured. If the door is hard to lift, then it is out of balance. This is a hazardous condition, and correction by a technician should be recommended.

Raise the door to the fully open position. Then close the door. The door should move freely without difficulty. But it should not open or close more quickly than the force applied. If the door is difficult to open or close, the door should be inspected by a trained door systems technician.

The rollers should stay in the track. If any rollers fall out of the track, the door system should be repaired by a trained door systems technician.

After conducting this check, reconnect the door to the opener, if present. This is generally done by activating the opener until it reconnects itself to the door.

#6 Spring Containment

The counterbalance system is usually comprised of torsion springs, mounted above the door header, or extension springs, which are usually found next to the horizontal track. When springs break, containment helps to prevent broken parts from flying dangerously in the garage. Torsion springs are already mounted on a shaft, which inherently provides containment. If the door has

extension springs, verify that spring containment is present. Extension springs should be contained by a secure cable that runs through the center of the springs.

#7 Wall Push Button

Locate the push-button on the wall. Measure the vertical distance between the button and the floor. The button should be at least five feet above the standing surface and high enough to be out of reach of small children. Press the push button to see if it successfully operates the door.

#8 Photoelectric Eyes

Federal law states that residential garage door openers manufactured after 1992 must be equipped with photoelectric eyes or some other safety-reverse feature. If the garage door has an opener, then check to see if photoelectric eyes are installed. They should be near the floor, mounted to the left and right sides of the bottom door panel. The beam of the photoelectric eyes should not be greater than six inches above the floor.

#9 Non-Contact Reversal Test

This check applies to door systems that are equipped with photoelectric eyes. Standing inside the garage and safely away from the path of the door, use the remote control or wall button to close the door. As the door is closing, wave an object in the path of the photoelectric eye beam. The door should immediately reverse and return to the fully open position.

#10 Contact Reversal Test

In some rare instances, a contact reversal test could damage the door system when the opener's force-setting has been improperly set or when the opener reinforcement bracket is not securely or appropriately attached to the top section. If you have any concerns that a contact reversal test may cause damage, don't conduct the test. This check applies to doors with openers.

Begin this test with the door fully open. Under the center of the door, place a 2x4 piece of wood flat on the floor, in the path of the door. Standing inside the garage, but safely away from the path of the door, use the wall push button to close the door. When the door contacts the wood, the door should automatically reverse direction and return to the fully open position.