

# KEEPING YOUR GARAGE DOOR AND MOTOR UP TO CODE

*By Roy Bardowell, CDDC*

Codes are constantly changing so enhanced safety can be implemented. In 1993 there was a major change made with garage door motors on a national scale. Between 1986 and 1993 the code called for all door operators sold in the USA must have some sort of obstruction detection that will reverse a closing door if it meets an obstruction while closing.

While most door operators employed a mechanical system that would detect an opposing force and reverse a door when closing, the mechanical systems met the code requirements, however one flaw in the mechanical force detection was they were not very sensitive and could be over adjusted to the point where an obstruction would not be detected. When an operator reversing system was not adjusted correctly it became dangerous.



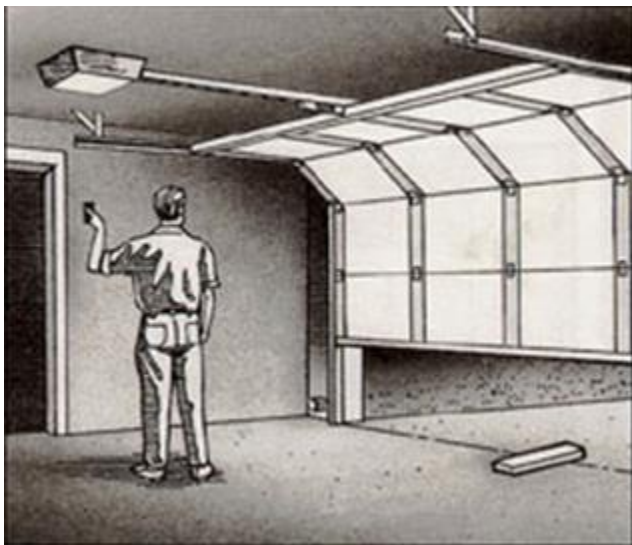
In an effort to eliminate the unsafe condition, the Consumer Product Safety Commission sanctioned Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to update the garage door standard that governs safety on garage doors to instruct manufacturers to provide a better safety system.

The 5th edition of the UL 325 safety standard stated that all garage door operators needed to be provided with an external reversing safety system along with the mechanical reversing system.



Most motor operator manufacturers complied on time and today we have the safest door operators ever made. The update went into effect on January 1, 1993. We are 27 years

into the updated code and there are still operators installed in homes before 1986 that may not reverse if it hits an object while closing. You should test your door by placing a 2x4 flat on the ground near the center of the door. The door should reverse within 2 seconds after landing on the board. If it does not, it is your responsibility to bring the door and or operator up to code. This can only be accomplished by adjusting the safety system to be more sensitive or by installing a newer operator.



Some states have codes that prevent an operator that doesn't reverse from being worked or adjusted—PERIOD. In that case, the operator must be discarded and you can only bring the system up to code with a new safer replacement. This code is effective in

New York, Minnesota, and California. The state of California has other codes you must adhere to. The latest code is SB969 which states that all residential garage door operators sold and installed in California after July 1, 2019 must employ a Battery backup to permit operation during a power outage.



You should check your reversing system as instructed above and check your battery backup system every 90 days. Simply by disconnecting the operator plug from the ceiling outlet should flip your operator to battery mode. Any pushbutton or remote should activate the motor and lift the door. After checking out the battery status, be sure to plug the unit back into the ceiling outlet. It's the home power supply that charges the batteries in the operator and maintains a full charge. Like any battery there comes a time when they will lose power. If this happens you must call for professional service to replace the battery with the correct ones. Go to [www.doors.org](http://www.doors.org) to locate a certified service company in your area.

*Roy Bardowell, CDDC, served as Operations Manager at Guardian Access & Door Hardware until 2014. He has been in the door and operator industry since 1973 and is known as one of the industry's most experienced operator technicians and trainers. Roy received the IDEA Commitment to Excellence award in 2008 and IDA's Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Service Award in 2017. Contact him at [roythedoorman@gmail.com](mailto:roythedoorman@gmail.com)*