

WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

Many years ago, I was asked by a garage door installer to assist him on determining a problem he had with a 16x7 residential garage door. He told me the door would open too fast and the trolley would impact the operator lamp cover. The homeowners had already replaced the lamp dome twice and were in need of a better solution. I figured the tools for door repair and operator adjustments were needed on this day.

When someone has asked me for assistance, I usually meet them on the job, and many times I do not bring my own tools with me, expecting to use the serviceman's tools. On this particular day, I said "what the heck" and brought my tool boxes. I have many toolboxes that are for specific purposes.

My main blue toolbox has all the tools needed to do spring or cable work. In this box, I have two pairs of winding bars, a cable puller, three sizes of vise grips and various extra fasteners like the square red bolts used in winding cones and cable drums.



A track anvil also comes in handy also when replacing rollers. I originally separated the tools per job type, so I didn't need to carry

every tool I own to every job. The rational was to not carry too much weight if not needed. This idea was flawed because I soon discovered, the one tool I needed to complete the job I had left home.

My red toolbox is just when wiring will be done. I have extra bell wire, insulated staples, my arrow stapler with curved staples, and wiring tools such as a wire cutter, wire stripper and a long needle-nose plier. Also required are standard variable screw-drivers, oh yeah...and a volt meter.



I have to admit many guys don't carry the above-mentioned stuff and this has been a problem whenever I go out with a technician who is short on tools. If that's not enough, I also have a green toolbox for door operator

work only. In this box, I have #48 and #41 roller chain master links and a belt clip for when a belt is torn.



It may seem like a lot to carry, but the one time you go out on service without all this stuff, is a day you will regret. Because it usually means you have to go home and return again which is the biggest waste of time.

When I met the guy with the hot 16'x7' door, the first thing I tried was to move the door manually. I had trouble holding back the door from opening into the motor head. I asked the guy if he did the spring installation and he said, "no". One thing was for sure. Tension on the springs had to be decreased. We did that with no good results. It was then I decided to check if the springs were the correct ones for this door. After measuring the spring wire, I called my son, Roy, at Luxor Door; who has the list of correct springs for most door models and he confirmed the springs were incorrect.

We spoke with the homeowner who said he had the springs changed only six months before. It took a demonstration with him opening the door manually to convince him, the springs were not the correct ones. He thought the springs were unnecessary, thinking the door operator did all the lifting. This is a common thought pattern with homeowners.

Many think the motor operator does all the heavy lifting and are usually stunned to find out the springs do 75% of the lifting. I guess this is why people go to Home Depot to buy an operator when their springs fracture. It would be nice if the people in the garage door department asked the homeowner if they tried their door in the manual mode. Homeowners erroneously think the operator is too weak and needs to be replaced, never considering a spring is no good.

Anyway, finally we were able to convince the reluctant homeowner to authorize the spring work. He called the company that did the original work for a refund, however the company told him the warranty period had expired. To make it easier on him, we only replaced one spring at a reduced cost.



Miraculously, the door balanced perfectly and this prevented the door from crashing into the motor head every time it opened. The homeowner couldn't have been happier. Another way we could have fixed the issue would have been to drill a hole in the rail and

place a bolt in the rail to act as a positive stop. This seems like an easy solution, but it can slowly destroy the trolley carriage from the constant impact day after day, and replacing a trolley is not an easy job and will be expensive, so I typically don't take this road.

There are many servicemen who do garage door service without having the proper tools and this is a common issue I find disturbing.

I have felt sorry for some technicians who lack the basic tools, I wish I had a dollar every time I have told a door technician, "When you do not carry the correct tool, you waste too much time fiddling around".

One time when I felt sorry seeing a guy suffering while using a regular side cutter to cut a cable which is not the correct tool and wasn't working, I gave the technician my favorite \$45.00 cable cutter.



I'm not usually this generous, but this guy was new to garage door service and I wanted him to start out right. Later that night, I emailed him the list of proper tools needed for every job type. He thanked me, but I don't know if he followed through. I hope he seized my advice!

Not having the correct tools will inhibit you from doing efficient service and it will take you longer every time. If you want to waste your time, go ahead!

Note: If you're doing commercial garage door service you can expect to need many more expensive tools and hundreds of various replacement parts.

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