

Garage Door Shortages

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

During the Pandemic there were many essential items that became scarce and caused problems at home. Although there have been times when other crises caused shortages of commodities, I was agitated to hear garage doors and some garage door hardware became scarce during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Bottled water is usually the first item that becomes limited during a crisis, because people tend to over-buy water first, so it wipes the shelves clean of water first. The Covid Pandemic caused shortages of things that were never scarce before. After bottled water, toilet paper also disappeared. Items that could help fight the virus, such as masks and hand sanitizers also disappeared from shelves almost immediately.



There is a lesson that can be learned from these shortages. Everyone should have a good supply of the above-mentioned items. The beauty of the above items is they don't expire and can be stored for long stretches of time. My father, who lived for many years in Southwest Florida, had 25 five-gallon bottles of water stored in case a hurricane blew through his region, which was normal for

Florida. During a visit he proudly showed off his prepared storage items. I was shocked the first time I saw his stored items, but understood that power outages normally occur during and after hurricanes when strong winds or rain can cause power lines to topple and may keep you at home in *Survival Mode* for days at a time.

Periodic steel shortages have wreaked havoc on steel garage doors and steel garage door hardware, adding weeks to the normal lead time for these products; however, I never expected to see the extreme shortages we experienced in some other manufactured garage door components. Without ample supplies of steel, our industry came to a grinding halt in October, 2020. Many resources have slowly returned to normal, but spring wire is nearly impossible to find at the time this article is being published.



Garage Door Torsion springs are the most essential component in garage door maintenance and service. When a counterbalancing spring fractures, the door

becomes nearly impossible to open, causing a huge problem for homeowners who need their car for daily chores.

Without a doubt, the Pandemic will probably go down as one of the most devastating times in American History. The USA was experiencing the best economy in modern times, but the Pandemic knocked the wind out of it in only a few months.

First off, at the onset of the Pandemic, employees were encouraged to stay home to quarantine and prevent the spread of the virus. Without laborers, some manufacturers could not maintain their great level of service, production, or delivery. Lack of labor was the first cause for shortages in our industry, but it trickled down to sub-suppliers who were in the same pinch. Most garage doors, the hardware, and motor operators are made from steel. Not all shortages were due to the Pandemic.



When Joe Biden became President, he embarked on a cause to reverse any good the previous administration had accomplished. Almost immediately Biden cancelled the Keystone pipeline in January, 2021. Only the prospect of less fuel for cars and trucks caused a huge increase in the price of fuel. Some trucking companies began limiting their services and set longer delivery times for shipped goods. The prices rose along with delays we never experienced before.

One of Luxor Door suppliers has raised pricing 5 times since the beginning of the year. It's true these increases will be passed on to the homeowners. I assume this is the case across the entire list of service companies, meaning electrical, plumbing, and HVAC company services may also continue to go higher.

My son, who owns Luxor Door service in Orange County, CA waited 3 months for door deliveries instead of the normal 5-15 days.

This was the most harrowing time for Luxor Door and probably with most other garage door service companies everywhere, because people who received stimulus money were looking for new garage doors and there were none to be had. You had to be careful, not to tell people the date for completion of a new garage door installation out of fear you couldn't meet the dates promised. Some new customers were not happy with the long lead times, but little by little my son and his technicians were able to satisfy every new homeowner.

The thing that saved Luxor from a worse time was their flexibility and the desire to maintain a normal level of stock. This meant driving 400 miles to Phoenix, AZ, every month where there are a dozen major manufacturers of garage door hardware and components could be ordered and picked-up on their own. Without being able to buy the steel, garage door components and the delays in delivery, it is difficult to forecast normalcy but I expect this country will be normal again very soon.

We're nearing July, 2021 and it is clearly a different day now. Steel mills have increased production of steel sheet and steel coils. Delivery by truck has improved and with the price of gasoline closing on \$5.00 per gallon

in California, there is no foresight into when fuel prices will go lower.



Price & demand are in play now. Without the uncertainty on oil production, and supplies now or in the near future, it is impossible to tell when or if things will get better. From 2017 to 2019, the US had reached a point of self-dependency on Energy. Oil reserves

were at their highest levels in decades, and natural gas and heating oil were at their lowest price in decades. Until we reach that status again, high fuel prices will cause delivery costs by truck to remain at the higher levels we are seeing today. Since everything we purchase daily is delivered by truck, we can only expect prices will continue to climb higher, spurning higher inflation. Inflation is our biggest threat.

The reason why I wrote this significant article is, because it reminds us to plan any big project carefully by expecting higher costs and remind us all there could be possible delays.

PLAN ahead CAREFULLY!

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