



DASMA
Door & Access Systems
Manufacturers Association
International

DOOR OPERATOR & ELECTRONICS DIVISION

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

#385

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Opening a Motorized Garage Door to Exit a Home Through the Garage in a Power Outage

It may be necessary to exit a home through a garage during a power outage, particularly in times such as a fire or other emergency in the home or garage. This Technical Data Sheet provides guidance in such situations, specifically addressing the following:

- people attempting to physically exit their homes through the garage in the absence of a pedestrian door leading to the outside, or
- people attempting to exit their property by driving a vehicle out of the garage.

These important points should be observed:

1. **If you live in an area prone to power outages or areas that can be affected by wildfires, an operator equipped with a battery backup will be a convenient method of getting the garage door open in a power outage.** The battery backup should be tested periodically to make sure it supplies adequate power to open a closed door to its fully open position. The battery will require replacement after 2 – 5 years depending on usage and type. Most battery backed operators have a visual or audible status indicator that will provide an alert when the battery needs replacing. Consult the user manual for the operator or contact the manufacturer for information about the battery status indicators and for instructions on the replacement of the battery.
2. **If the operator fails to open the garage door, disconnect the operator and manually operate the door.** For anyone wishing to exit their home through the garage, first locate the manual disconnect which is a red handle hanging from a cord from the operator or rail. This handle should be approximately six (6) feet above the floor. Pulling downward on this handle releases the operator to allow the door to be lifted up manually. Find a suitable handle or gripping point to safely and securely lift the door to its fully open position.

Note: Technical Data Sheets are information tools only and should not be used as substitutes for instructions from individual manufacturers. Always consult with individual manufacturers for specific recommendations for their products and check the applicable local regulations.

This Technical Data Sheet was prepared by the members of DASMA's Commercial & Residential Garage Door Division Technical Committee. DASMA is a trade association comprising manufacturers of rolling doors, fire doors, grilles, counter shutters, sheet doors, and related products; upward-acting residential and commercial garage doors; operating devices for garage doors and gates, sensing devices, and electronic remote controls for garage doors and gate operators; as well as companies that manufacture or supply either raw materials or significant components used in the manufacture and installation of the Active Members' products.

3. **Maintain the garage door and operator.** A homeowner should do a routine, general checkup of their door and operator following the manufacturer's instructions. DASMA also provides a checklist published in [Technical Data Sheet #167](#). It is particularly important to be able to manually open and close the door with little effort. Homeowners may also wish to have a local dealer provide a professional inspection of the door system.
4. **Do not expect a garage door operator to compensate for a poorly maintained door.** A garage door operator should be installed only on a properly balanced and lubricated garage door. An improperly balanced door may not reverse when required and could result in severe injury or death.

These points should help avoid the need to drive a vehicle through the garage door in order to exit the premises. Collapsing the garage door in that circumstance will result in release of stored tension in the door counterbalance system, potentially putting both the vehicle and its occupants at risk.

To conclude, members of a household should be familiar with the means of exiting the garage. Small children will not be able to reach either an operator push button or an operator manual release, so they should be accommodated accordingly.

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