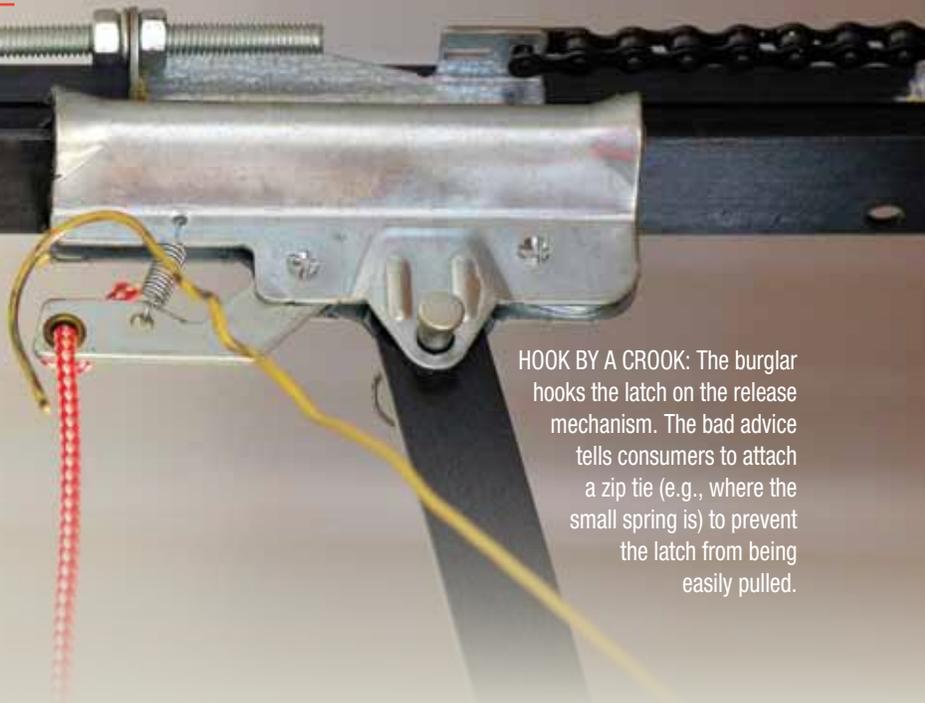


VIDEO OF SIX-SECOND BREAK-IN GOES VIRAL

TV Stations Spread Bad Advice

By Tom Wadsworth, Editor, CDDC



HOOK BY A CROOK: The burglar hooks the latch on the release mechanism. The bad advice tells consumers to attach a zip tie (e.g., where the small spring is) to prevent the latch from being easily pulled.

“Breaking into a garage ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 seconds, the door’s open, and it wasn’t even that loud.”

That’s the voice-over on a 48-second YouTube video that shows how to break into a garage door in only six seconds. After pushing in the top of the top section, the burglar threads a wire coat-hanger through the opening, then hooks and pulls the latch on the emergency release mechanism.

The video, posted in 2008, began increasing in popularity in early 2014. As of June 8, it had attracted about 1.5 million views.

TV news coverage may be affecting the number of views. Since February, the news of the break-in method has been aired on least at 12 TV news stations from Portland, Ore., to Hartford, Conn., Jacksonville, Fla., and many points in between.

So, What’s the Problem?

Most of the news stories tell homeowners that they can easily thwart this break-in method by attaching a zip tie to block access to the latch. In many of the stories, a local garage door dealer is cited as approving the zip tie. A few stories recommend that the homeowner remove the emergency release handle.

However, the release handle is

required by federal law, and the zip-tie method is strongly discouraged by DASMA and Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Since a zip tie obstructs and limits the handle’s use, attaching the zip tie creates an unsafe and potentially deadly condition.

UL and federal law require that the emergency release must detach the operator using a maximum of 50 pounds of force. Breaking a typical zip tie likely requires more force than that, as one test required 75 pounds of pressure.

Other factors weigh against the zip tie. Since they come in varying thicknesses, some designs may require even more pressure. In addition, attaching a zip tie may void the warranty on the operator.

UL is aware of the break-in video and the news stories promoting the use of zip ties. UL is working with DASMA and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to prepare a statement that adequately warns the public of the issues. Until the official statement is released, door dealers need to be aware of some key facts.

Not As Easy As Advertised

1. DASMA is unaware of a single documented break-in that actually used this wire coat-hanger method.
2. The break-in video presumes that the burglar would be brazen enough to attempt the break-in from the center of

your garage door, which is often in full view of the street and neighbors.

3. The break-in method presumes that the garage door has windows. If the door has no windows, the burglar would be blindly fishing.
4. It also presumes that the door is a two-car door. A one-car door is not likely to flex enough to allow entry by a wire hanger. Many two-car doors with a strut on the top section are also not easily flexed.

Good Advice

Nonetheless, if a customer asks you for ways to defeat this type of break-in, here are some alternatives.

1. Frost your garage door windows to obscure visibility.
2. Add a motion-sensing exterior light outside the garage. Burglars are less likely to operate in plain view in a well-lit area.
3. If you have an attached garage, lock the pass door between the house and garage. If someone does get into your garage, they won’t be able to get into the house.
4. If you park your car outside the garage, keep the car locked to prevent access to the remote control. Better yet, keep the remote out of plain view or keep it with you at all times.
5. To prevent car theft, never leave your car keys in the car or the garage, even when the car is inside the garage. ■