

# HOW MANY GARAGE DOOR DEALERS ARE IN THE UNITED STATES?



## ANSWERING A LONG-DEBATED QUESTION

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OVER THE YEARS, I'VE HEARD DEBATES ABOUT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GARAGE DOOR DEALERS IN THE UNITED STATES. SOME HAVE ESTIMATED THE TOTAL TO BE 5,000 TO 7,000, BUT I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT THAT THESE NUMBERS ARE TOO LOW. SO, FOR THIS STUDY, I SET OUT TO DETERMINE A RELIABLE NUMBER.



# TOP 10 GARAGE DOOR STATES

## Why it matters

Why is the number important? The number of door dealers can be useful in a variety of ways to manufacturers, dealers, distributors, and industry trade associations. For example, what percentage of all garage door dealers are members of IDA? The number of actual IDA members is known, but does that number represent 50% of all dealers or only 5%?

Garage door manufacturers would also benefit from knowing the number of dealers. Since manufacturers constantly work to add new dealers, they want to know the total number of dealers that may be legitimate prospects. If they knew the total number, manufacturers would be able to determine their degree of progress in increasing their share of the market.

When the total number of dealers is known, dealers and manufacturers will be able to determine a typical “saturation” level for a given market. For example, if there is typically one dealer for every 30,000 people in the population, we can ascertain whether a particular market is over- or underserved by door dealers. We know the total U.S. population, but we need to know the total number of dealers in order to determine a typical saturation level for a given market.

These are just a few examples of the importance of knowing a reasonably accurate number of door dealers. I’m sure that manufacturers and industry analysts can come up with ideas for more beneficial uses of this number.

## Defining “garage door dealer”

A critical step in establishing the correct number is to establish an appropriate definition of “garage door dealer.” For this investigation, I define “garage door dealer” as any retail company in the United States that sells, services, and installs residential or commercial sectional garage doors.

This definition does not require a dealer to have a storefront, and dealers with only one employee are included. In other words, the so-called “tailgater” who operates out of a truck would qualify as a “garage door dealer.”

## The source for our study

For this study, I did a close analysis of the mailing list for Door + Access Systems Newsmagazine, which is probably the largest and best list in the industry. The list has been developed over many years, often gaining new additions from DASMA members who have confidentially shared their dealer lists.

The list is never shared, rented, or sold. Since I am the primary person who has developed this list for the last 20 years, I am able to analyze the list in detail.

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This mailing list is regularly updated with a “merge and purge” process that deletes duplicates and addresses that are no longer active. While inaccurate addresses are always possible, the list has been remarkably reliable for two decades.

### Refining the list

The total mailing list contains about 20,000 entries; 90 percent (18,000) are dealer personnel, and 10 percent (2,000) are manufacturer personnel. To find the total number of dealer *companies*, I removed the manufacturer entries but retained the few manufacturers that also install garage doors. Then, since some dealers receive more than one copy (e.g., for the owner, for the general manager, for a second location, etc.), I removed duplicate mailings that go to one company.

I also deleted hundreds of companies that appeared to be devoted to the fence, gate, or security industries, as well as other companies that seemed likely to be only tangentially related to the garage door industry. These included, for example, dealers that focus solely on rolling doors or high performance doors.

In the end, my analysis determined that there are 10,560 garage door dealers in the U.S. Yet, the accuracy of this number could be affected by certain variables.

### Is 10,560 too high?

Many of the dealers in our database carry names that say nothing about garage doors or about the products that they sell. Thus, it’s hard to tell if they really are a “garage door dealer.” These companies would

be “miscounted dealers”; that is, those dealers that were counted mistakenly.

For example, many dealers have names like “John Smith Industries” or “JMS Inc.” It is possible that some of these dealers, as well as other companies that were retained on the list, do not meet our definition of a “garage door dealer.”

### Is 10,560 too low?

At the same time, I may have mistakenly removed some fence, gate, or security companies that are truly “garage door dealers.” In other words, my efforts to trim the list may have been too aggressive; I may have deleted some companies that should have been retained.

In addition, our list is likely to lack many “uncounted dealers” that are not on our mailing list. New companies are created every time a technician branches out on his own. It might be years before they are added to our mailing list.

Over the years, I have continually been amazed when I find garage door companies that don’t get our magazine or the IDA magazine. It would be foolish to assume that our mailing list contains 100% of all dealers. It’s possible that our list of 10,560 represents only 90% of actual dealers. If that’s true, the list should be 10% more, or almost 12,000.

Overall, it seems reasonable that the number of *uncounted* dealers exceeds the number of *miscounted* dealers. If that is true, the total number of U.S. garage door dealers may be around 11,000 or even more.

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## Dealers per population

The U.S. population was estimated at 329 million in 2019. If we assume there are 11,000 garage door dealers in the U.S., then there is, on average, one dealer for every 30,000 people (actually 29,909). In my home area, that “saturation rate” seems about right.

However, this calculation needs to consider the total number of installers and technicians at that dealer company. If a garage door dealer with 50 employees is the only company serving a population of 30,000 people, that area may be heavily overserved. Conversely, if a door company with only one employee is the sole company serving 30,000 people, that area may be significantly underserved.

## Analysis by state

California has far more garage door dealers than any other state. California is also, by far, the most populous state, and it continues to grow. Yet it has only one dealer for every 46,700 people, well above the average of 30,000 people per dealer. This could reflect a higher number of carports in the state (i.e., fewer garage doors per person), or it could mean that the state could use more garage door dealers to service its growing population.

Ohio, however, has the second-most garage door dealers in the nation, yet its population is ranked *seventh*. Among the top 10 states, Ohio has the highest saturation rate of door dealers, as each dealer serves a population of only 16,300, well below the average of 30,000 people.

## High saturation in the Midwest

Similarly, the states of Illinois and Michigan have a high saturation rate. Illinois dealers typically serve 19,400 people, and Michigan dealers serve only 17,800 people. The reason for the high saturation rates of Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan could be related to the long history of these three states being home to some of the nation’s oldest and largest garage door manufacturers. When these manufacturers are first getting established, it’s common for them to establish a higher concentration of dealers in their immediate area.

For example, Ohio has been home to Clopay, Wayne Dalton, Haas, Genie, Kinneer, Quincy, Plycraft, and Premium. Illinois has been the home of Raynor, Rowe, Barcol, Frantz, Chamberlain, McKee, Gadco, Richards-Wilcox, C.H.I., Marantec, and Hörmann. Michigan is the birthplace of Overhead Door, Crawford, Berry, Taylor, Stanley, Mahon, and Masco.

# TOP 10 GARAGE DOOR DEALER STATES

State	Door Dealers <sup>1</sup>	Population (Rank) <sup>2</sup>	Population/Dealer
1. California	854	39,865,590 (1)	46,681
2. Ohio	715	11,689,442 (7)	16,349
3. Texas	675	29,206,997 (2)	43,270
4. Illinois	656	12,741,080 (6)	19,422
5. Michigan	561	9,995,915 (10)	17,818
6. Florida	534	21,299,325 (3)	39,886
7. Pennsylvania	499	12,807,060 (5)	25,665
8. New York	485	19,542,209 (4)	40,293
9. Washington	428	7,535,591 (13)	17,607
10. New Jersey	408	8,908,520 (11)	21,835
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,815</b>	<b>173,591,729</b>	<b>Avg. 28,883</b>

<sup>1</sup>This column represents the number of retail garage door companies in the state that sell, install, and service sectional garage door products. Source: Door + Access Systems Newsmagazine.

<sup>2</sup>The number in parentheses represents that state’s population rank among all 50 states. Illinois, for example, is ranked the sixth-largest U.S. state by population. Source: United States Census Bureau 2019 estimates.

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30,000 PEOPLE.



### Two states to note

Florida continues to grow (by population) rapidly. The population is up 13.3% from 2010 and is the third-fastest-growing state. Conversely, Florida has a low saturation of garage door dealers, with only one dealer for every 40,000 people. This could mean that the state is ripe for more professional dealers to service its ever-increasing population.

One state that surprises me is Washington. Over the last 20 years, Washington has gained more garage door companies than any other state. In 2003, it had the 14th-highest number of garage door companies in the nation, but now it has jumped to #9.

Washington now has the *second-highest saturation rate* of door dealers among our top 10 states, with one dealer for every 17,600 people. This baffles me. If you have any explanations for the rise of door dealers in Washington, please send an email to [trw@tomwadsworth.com](mailto:trw@tomwadsworth.com).

### The key takeaways

Here are the key takeaways from this study.

- There are about 11,000 “garage door dealers” in the United States.
- In a typical market, there is one garage door dealer for every 30,000 people.
- Among the 10 states with the most garage door dealers, California has the most dealers, but it has a low saturation rate of only one dealer for every 46,700 people.
- Ohio has the second-most garage door dealers, but it has a high saturation rate of one dealer for every 16,300 people. ■

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