

The

10 DO'S & DON'TS

of Installing Residential GDOs

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

An improperly installed residential garage door operator (GDO) can create a hazardous situation. All professional door operator installers must not only be familiar with the rules, regulations, and safety requirements, but also must obey them to the letter. Here are five do's and five don'ts to follow when installing residential GDOs.



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1 DO familiarize yourself with the manufacturer's instruction manual. It can be found in the operator carton or on the company's website. The information in the manual is there for everyone's safety and must be carried out exactly as described. It's the recipe book for a safe installation.

2 DO install the correct operator that is specified for that door. Some operators are manufactured for sectional doors only and not recommended for one-piece doors. Smaller well-balanced doors do not require a 1/2- or 3/4-HP operator. It's a waste of power and electricity.

3 DO install all the door and operator safety labels according to the instruction manual. This is one of the biggest violations I see, even though the one operator safety label takes only 10 seconds to apply. Regardless of homeowner protests, the label must be installed near the push-button or wall console.

4 DO take the time to inform the homeowner of the correct operational procedures and safety systems. You can prevent an unnecessary call-back by showing the homeowner how the safety systems work, how to use the emergency release cord, and how to safely operate the door manually.

5 DO practice safety at all times. Use a ladder safely and be careful around electricity. When you're on an installation, your safety and your customer's safety are your responsibility.

6 DON'T install an operator on an unbalanced door or one that is heavy to lift. I know of no better way to upsell on a job than by informing a homeowner that the door is legitimately dangerous and must be repaired.

7 DON'T install the photo-eyes higher than 6" above the floor, as required by UL 325. To be on the safe side, I have always installed the photo-eyes at 5-3/4" high. Remember to use the actual beam as your reference and not the photo-eye body. The 6" maximum setting for photo-eyes is not only a requirement for residential doors, but is also highly recommended on commercial, industrial, and gate operators.

8 DON'T install the push-button or wall console anywhere you please. UL 325 says the button must be installed a minimum of 5' from the floor or other standing surface. Be sure to install the button(s) within line of sight of the operator. To be safe, I install my push-buttons 61" above the floor.

9 DON'T adjust the force settings too high. Many newer operators automatically set the up and down forces, but other new operators have manual settings, not to mention the millions of older units already installed. Test the force by holding out your arms under the closing door. When the door contacts your arms, try to reverse the door. If the force is set too high, repeat this action until the door reverses with minimal force. Afterward, test the operator reversal at the floor with the 2x4 board laid flat.

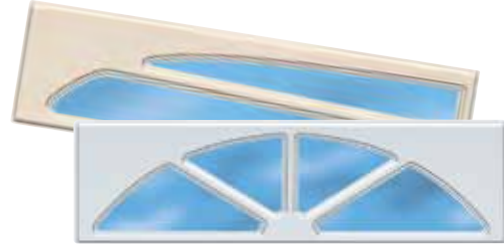
10 DON'T forget to test all features and systems for proper functionality. Test the push-button and any wireless transmitters for range. Test the photo-eyes, the inherent reversing mechanism, and the manual release. The manual release handle should be less than 6 feet from the floor so children can reach it.

As an owner, you should periodically audit your technicians' installations. In my 38-year history, I have stumbled on many jobs that are unsafe and do not comply with the manufacturer's instruction manuals. In January I removed a set of photo-eyes from the ceiling and set them on the sides of the door where they belong.

Following these 10 simple do's and don'ts will increase your professionalism, build a good reputation for you and your company, and, most importantly, keep your customers safe. ■

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