



# ASK JOE HETZEL

## DASMA Technical Director

### Rolling Fire Doors That Don't Operate

*We have a rolling steel fire door that no longer operates. Can we just leave it in the closed position?*

**Joe:** A rolling steel fire door that is no longer needed to function as a door cannot be left in the closed position and ignored. NFPA 80 requires that the door must either be maintained as an operational door, including annual inspection and drop testing, or the door must be removed and the opening filled to maintain the required rating of the wall assembly. A rolling steel fire door is rated differently from its surrounding wall material and thus cannot be considered the same as a wall.

### Balancing High-Lift Doors

*I have a door with high-lift tracks, and I am having a problem getting the door to balance halfway open. What can I do to get the door perfectly balanced?*

*Note: Expanding on his answer to this same question in our spring issue, Joe responds with input from Vanessa Graden of C.H.I. and Dwayne Kornish of Wayne Dalton, members of DASMA's Commercial & Residential Garage Door Technical Committee.*

**Joe:** How a door is counterbalanced is affected by how the door weight is distributed and the height of the vertical track relative to the height of the door.

For a door (1) without glazing, (2) with sections that look identical, and (3) with sections that weigh about the same, the door should move very minimally by itself when the door bottom is at any point above the floor. Ideally, the door should be a bit "heavy" at the floor to seal the bottom, and should be a bit "light" at the top to allow the bottom of the door to clear the garage opening header.

Glazing at the top section may cause a door to be unevenly balanced because of the extra weight it adds, including the weight of additional strutting. In this case, the best balance point may be somewhere in the middle between the open and closed positions.

A high-lift door presents another counterbalance challenge. In certain circumstances, high-lift doors may be slightly out of balance in the middle portion of their travel.

In any door design, counterbalancing is intended to minimize the amount of force needed to operate the door. This is for the safety of anyone manually operating the door and to help lengthen the life of the motor for automated doors. If a door appears to be excessively out of balance, contact a trained door systems technician.

Finally, for more information about door safety, remember these resources at [dasma.com](http://dasma.com):

- TDS 165 provides guidelines for garage door manual operation.
- TDS 176 provides information on the potentially adverse effect on door balance when weight is added to a door. ■

*If a door appears to be excessively out of balance, contact a trained door systems technician.*

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