

# Self-Service Storage Doors and Accessibility

By Bray Allen, DBCI, DASMA Rolling Sheet Door Committee Chairman

*Editor's Note: If you sell or install doors for self-service storage facilities, this information will help you. These questions mention the A117.1 accessibility standard, which is an International Code Council standard of technical requirements for making buildings accessible. It is referenced by many federal documents, state accessibility laws, and the International Building Code.*

Even though “upward-acting doors” are not included in the A117.1 accessibility standard referenced in building codes, the rolling sheet door industry is sometimes faced with code compliance. DASMA has developed a Technical Data Sheet (TDS 289) on the subject. Here are some questions and answers based on situations encountered by building owners, code officials, and users of rolling sheet doors where accessibility is required.

## Are all self-service storage facility units required to be accessible?

No. The International Building Code requires a certain minimum or minimum percentage of the units to be accessible. The number of accessible units is dependent on the total number of units in a particular facility.

## Are there instances in which a unit that is required to be accessible does not need an accessible rolling sheet door?

Yes. When a pedestrian/swinging door is also provided, the rolling sheet door is not required to be accessible. Most rolling sheet door manufacturers offer a pedestrian/swinging door as an option.

## If a storage facility is required to be accessible and the rolling sheet door is automated, must the door also be accessible?

Yes. The means of disconnecting the motor must be accessible, and the means of manually operating the door must be accessible as well. The means of manually operating the door should only be used during loss of power.

## For a door that is intended to be automated, could the force required to manually open that door be higher than that for a purely manually operated door?

Yes. The force limit for an automated door may be higher. This is because of design features inherent in an automated door and because an automated door should be operated manually only during a loss of power, typically in an emergency.

## What are the acceptable ways to manually operate a rolling sheet door and still meet the accessibility code?

There are two common ways to achieve accessibility for rolling sheet doors, but these often depend on the discretion of the local inspector. The first way is to add a strategically placed strap and rope to the door as shown in DASMA TDS 289.

The second way is to automate the door. Automation is generally not a favorable option because of the added cost of electrical labor and materials. The door manufacturer can typically offer materials for the design and location of these items.

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## Is there a way to ensure that rolling sheet doors obtain approval?

No. Since upward-acting doors are not mentioned in A117.1, there is no way to determine whether a local inspector will accept any of the above methods. That is why it is imperative that such issues be discussed with your local inspector and your door supplier before the project begins. ■

