

HOME  
SAFETY  
TIPS

NON REVERSING GARAGE DOOR  
OPENERS A HAZARD

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U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION  
AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

# Consumer Product SAFETY ALERT

FROM THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

48 CHILDREN KILLED

## Non-Reversing Garage Door Openers A Hazard

Homeowners with automatic garage door openers that do not automatically reverse should repair or replace them with new openers which do reverse to prevent young children from being trapped and killed under closing garage doors.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), 48 children between the ages of 2 and 14 were trapped and killed under automatic garage doors between March, 1982 and August, 1991; other children have suffered brain damage or serious injuries when the closing door contacted them, and failed to stop and reverse its direction.

CPSC urges consumers to check the condition and operation of their garage door and the opener.

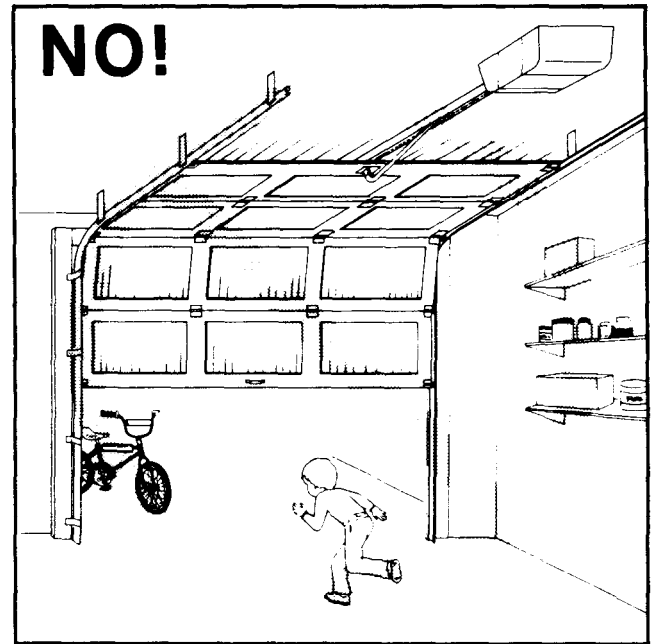
To check the garage door, the garage door opener must be detached from the door; on most openers manufactured since 1982, a "quick-release" mechanism is provided which permits the opener to be detached from the door.

A properly operating garage door will be "balanced." This means that the door will stay in place when stopped in any partially opened position. The door should not stick or bind when opened or closed. If doors are not "balanced," or if they bind or stick, they should be serviced by a professional.

Once the garage door is operating properly, homeowners can then check the garage door's reversing mechanism by placing a two-inch wooden block on the floor of the garage in the door's path. If the door does not properly reverse on striking the block, the unit should be disengaged until repairs are made or a new automatic door opener installed.

The safety agency said all homeowners should disconnect all garage door openers that have not been certified as meeting the requirements of the voluntary ANSI/UL standard 325-1982. The standard calls for a number of safety features not found on earlier openers, and also subjects new openers to more stringent safety tests.

CPSC cautions consumers that not all devices that open and close the garage door are necessarily safe. Some old openers are equipped with a mechanism that only stops the closing door when it strikes an object, not reversing the door in the process. Other pre-1982 openers have a device intended to reverse the closing door when it strikes an object, but for reasons related to age, installa-



tion and maintenance, these products may not be safe enough to prevent entrapment of a child. These openers cannot be adjusted or repaired to provide the automatic reversing feature found on later devices.

For additional protection against entrapment, CPSC recommends an optional automatic "electric eye" installed near floor level to reverse a closing door automatically whenever an object crosses the door's path. Companies which install garage door openers can install these safety devices.

Consumers should inspect garage doors and operation of the door opener every 30 days to verify that the system is functioning properly. Hardware and fittings should be checked to keep the door on track at all times. Should a hazard exist, homeowners should disconnect the automatic opener from the door as specified in the owner's manual, and manually open and close the garage door until needed repair/replacement is completed.

Lastly, homeowners should relocate the wall switch in the garage as high as practical above the floor in an effort to restrict children's use of the automatic garage door. Remote control door operating devices should be kept locked in the car and away from children. Parents should also tell their children about the potential hazard.