



DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR OVERHEAD DOORS

By Madan Murthy & Garth Thomas

Many organizations don't include door systems in their safety programs, but there are good reasons to do so.

Look around, overhead doors are everywhere. But despite this, they are almost always overlooked as safety hazards, even in organizations with excellent safety programs. This oversight can have catastrophic consequences as commercial overhead doors are heavy, dynamic, and often operate where there is pedestrian traffic. Each year, there are far too many examples of avoidable “struck by” and “crushing” incidents involving overhead doors. And then there are the OHS compliance requirements to consider..

Why Pay Attention to Your Door Systems?

► To keep them operating properly and safely

Most commercial doors are made with small, inexpensive components such as cables, hinges, bearings and rollers that need regular maintenance and/or replacement. **Neglecting small problems can cause doors to become prone to failure, and sometimes dangerous.** To view a video link showing an overhead door falling [\[Click Here\]](#)

Also, many commercial overhead doors are equipped with motorized, electric operators that close the door automatically or semi-automatically. Doors operating this way create increased “struck by” or “crushing” risk, and it is mandatory they be equipped with appropriate entrapment devices (e.g., photo-eyes or sensing edge) that reverse the door’s direction should it encounter an obstruction while it is closing

► To comply with OHS law

Although often overlooked, overhead doors systems are subject to occupational health and safety compliance requirements in every province (see table below). OHS standards fall under two main categories:

General Duty Clauses – *These provisions, such as Division 3(115)(1) of Part 3 Occupational Health and Safety of the Workers Compensation Act of B.C., require employers to exercise “due diligence” to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace.*

Manufacturers’ Specifications – *OHS regulations in many jurisdictions specifically require equipment, which includes door systems, be installed, maintained, and configured according to manufacturers’ specifications and recommendations. One such example would be Part 3(12)(d) of Alberta’s Occupational Health and Safety Code which states, “an employer must ensure that equipment and supplies are... serviced, tested, adjusted, calibrated, maintained, repaired... in accordance with the manufacturers’ specifications...”.*

British Columbia	<i>Division 3(115)(1) of Part 3 Occupational Health and Safety of the Workers Compensation Act Section 4.3(2)(a) and Section 4.1 of Occupational Health and Safety Regulations</i>
Alberta	<i>Section 2(1) Occupational Health and Safety Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta Part 3(12)(d) Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code</i>
Saskatchewan	<i>Part III, Division 3, 3-8(a) of The Saskatchewan Employment Act, Occupational Health and Safety Part III (12)(a) and 25(1) of the Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulations</i>
Manitoba	<i>Section 4(1)(a) and Section 4(2)(a) of the Workplace Safety and Health Act Section 16.4(2) and Section 16.4(3) of the Workplace Safety and Health Regulation</i>
Ontario	<i>Part III Section 25(1)(b) and Section 25(2)(h) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act</i>
Quebec	<i>Division II Section 2(51) An Act respecting occupational health and safety</i>
Nova Scotia	<i>Section 13(1)(a) and Section 13(1)(b) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act Part 8 Section 84(1) of the Occupational Safety General Regulations</i>
New Brunswick	<i>Section 9(1)(a) and Section 9(2)(a) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 114(1), Section 114(2), and Section 235(1) of New Brunswick Regulation 91-191</i>
PEI	<i>Section 12(1)(a) and Section 12(1)(b) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 30.3(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations</i>
Newfoundland & Labrador	<i>Section 4 and Section 5(a) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 14(1), Section 18(1), Section 88(1), and Section 88(2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations</i>

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How to Properly Include Overhead Doors in Your Safety Program

To comply with OHS standards, and minimize safety risk, a planned maintenance and safety compliance program should be implemented for your overhead doors that meets the standards below. **Inspection, maintenance and repair work would typically be performed by a qualified overhead door service company.**

Standard #1 – All door systems should be installed, inspected and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications. This includes maintenance intervals, which can vary depending on daily cyclage and operating environment. If manufacturers' specifications are not available, then the PM program should adhere to established industry standards best practices (DASMA).

Standard #2 – All motorized door systems should be equipped with entrapment devices to manufacturers' standards, such as photo-eyes or sensing edges. If there are door systems equipped with older devices not current with newer, improved safety standards, modernizing should be considered where reasonably practicable (for example, upgrading to monitored entrapment devices).

Standard #3 – Documentation should be maintained that details:

Maintenance and service work performed

Problems or deficiencies found, preferably documented with notes and photographs; corrective action recommended; and corrective action taken

The explicit practices and standards used to inspect and maintain doors (eg. manufacturer's operating/maintenance manuals, or similar documentation)

Unless there are serious problems, **properly maintaining door systems is not expensive.** A thorough maintenance service typically needs doing once or twice per year. Depending on local service rates, the cost for most doors is between \$50-\$100.

Plus, **maintaining door systems has the added benefit of being cost-effective in its own right.** Most commercial doors are made with small, inexpensive components that wear, fatigue, and need checking and replacement during a door system's normal lifecycle. While regular maintenance is not a guarantee against future problems, finding and fixing small problems, like frayed cables or worn rollers, before they become big problems, like a door that falls, usually results in significant cost savings.



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