

Joint task force to address safety messaging



By Dan Dombkowski, LiftMaster

An industry task force has been formed over the past several months with representatives from AFA, DASMA, IDA, and IDEA. The overall purpose of the new Joint Task Force on Safety Messaging is to address how we communicate the importance of technicians' and end users' safety

to members of our industry and to end users themselves.

Throughout my 30+ years in this industry, safety has always been a focal topic for me. I can remember 20 years ago reading the stories of how incidents with residential garage door openers resulted in serious injuries and even in deaths of children. After UL 325 changes took effect in 1993, I relished the fact that residential garage door operators had become safer and that these tragic incidents have now been reduced if not almost eliminated. Further updates to UL 325 concerning commercial door operators and gate operators have increased the safety of those products as well.

Spreading the message

How can we, as manufacturers, distributors, dealers, installers, and technicians, effectively convey safety messages to building owners, facility managers, homeowners' association managers, and homeowners? The Joint Task Force on Safety Messaging will help address this question by supporting the message that *ensuring safety is not a cost but an investment with an immeasurable payback.*

Today, scam artists have infiltrated our industry. As a result, it has become difficult for our customers to distinguish between a scammer and a trustworthy technician. Scammers attempt to sell customers products they don't need or require in their efforts to inflate the final price. Credible technicians inform customers that replacement, repair, or the addition of safety-related products may be required or could aid in avoiding incidents that might result in an injury or death.

As an industry, we must set guidelines for what safety guidance is necessary and

desired. We have accomplished much already with industry standards like UL 325 for residential and commercial door operators.

On the gate side, we have the UL 325 standard for gate operators as well as the ASTM F2200 standard for the construction of the automated gate itself. These standards set minimal levels for safe installation and operation. It is important for all of us to adhere to these standards when applicable.

The campaign begins

This brings me to the second goal of the Task Force on Safety Messaging, which is to keep the safety message front of mind throughout the industry. Through this campaign, you will begin seeing safety-related articles authored by the Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation (IDEA) in subsequent issues of industry magazines. These articles will focus on safety in general, workplace safety, automotive safety, and end-user safety.

The first article in this series is "Old Vehicular Gate Operators: Don't Repair, Replace!" (see page 66). This article is useful for dealers, installers, and technicians to give to end users. If their gate operator was manufactured prior to 2000, the article urges them to replace it with a safer alternative instead of having it repaired.

Please read these upcoming articles and help us spread the word. If there are safety issues that you would like to see addressed, send your request to IDEA. Just go to www.dooreducation.com and click on the contact tab. We at IDEA look forward to hearing your suggestions for safety articles in the future. ■

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Dan Dombkowski is 32-year veteran with LiftMaster, has served on the IDEA board of directors for 10 years, and is now the immediate past president. He also has served in volunteer positions with DASMA since 2006 and as chair of the DASMA Training & Education Committee since 2011.



Photo courtesy of LiftMaster.

Old vehicular gate operators:

Don't repair, replace!

This is an important safety message from DASMA, North America's trade association for door and access control products, in collaboration with IDEA, IDA, AFA, and NOMMA.

The Door + Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) strongly recommends that gate operators manufactured before 2000 not be repaired, but rather replaced with an operator that is compliant with the latest (2016) safety requirements of Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and the gate operator industry.

Why replace a pre-2000 gate operator?

1. Safety. Older gate operators do not have the most current safety features. Thanks to advancements in technology, today's gate operators include improved entrapment protection devices such as photoelectric sensors that reverse or stop a gate when the beam is broken, battery backup to allow for operation during power outages, or the ability to control and monitor them via a smartphone or computer.

In March 2000, Underwriters Laboratories established UL 325, the standard for gate operator safety, with new requirements for all automated vehicular gate systems. UL 325 requires that two entrapment protection devices be included with or installed on the gate system in each existing entrapment zone. Additional updates to UL 325 that became effective in January 2016 require the gate operator to monitor for the connection of any external entrapment protection device.

2. Parts. Most major gate operator manufacturers no longer provide replacement parts for these non-compliant older models. Even if you could find some parts online, we recommend that you consider safety. Don't repair the operator; replace the operator with a safer one.

3. Cost. The cost to replace an older gate operator is relatively low. When adjusted for inflation, today's improved gate operators cost about the same as they did 15 years ago.

4. Code compliance. The following building codes, published by the International Code Council (ICC), require that gate operators meet the current UL 325 standards:

- International Building Code (IBC) – 2009 edition and later
- International Fire Code (IFC) – 2009 edition and later
- International Residential Code (IRC) – 2012 edition and later

In short, new gate operators are improved, smarter, safer, and affordable. Check manufacturers' websites for more details on the available features, and ask your professional installing dealer to meet or exceed the current safety standards.

How old is your gate operator?

All operators have a label that includes the manufacture date. If it is hard to locate the date, contact a gate system professional. If the date of manufacture is 1999 or earlier, replace it. Don't repair it.

For additional information, go to the DASMA website or to any of these leading manufacturers:

- AutoGate
- FAAC International
- HySecurity
- Nice Group USA
- DoorKing
- GTO Access Systems
- LiftMaster

Door & Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) is North America's trade association for manufacturers of garage doors, garage door and gate operators, and other access system products. Our 90+ member companies manufacture products sold in virtually every county in America, every Canadian province, and in more than 80 countries worldwide.

International Door Association (IDA) is the industry network for professional door and operator dealers and installers, along with their suppliers. While IDA represents the entire door and operator industry by promoting the use of professional dealers and installers, it is a membership-driven association, relying on the input and feedback of its members to create and deliver programs of value.

American Fence Association (AFA) represents the fence, deck, and railing industries in the U.S. and Canada. With its 31 member chapters, AFA offers educational and certification programs for automated gate operator installers. AFA played the major role in developing the curriculum for the IDEA Automated Gate Operator Installer Certification program and continues to play a role in updating the curriculum.

Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation (IDEA) is a non-profit educational foundation established by ARDI, DASMA, and IDA to provide professional door, gate, and operator dealers with education, accreditation, and certification programs. Its services help dealers and technicians meet IDEA's demanding criteria of business excellence.

"new gate operators are improved, smarter, safer, and affordable"

National Ornamental & Miscellaneous Metals Association (NOMMA) serves the ornamental and miscellaneous metals industry. Its nearly 600 members across the U.S. and in over a dozen foreign countries produce the full spectrum of ornamental and miscellaneous metalwork, ranging from railings to driveway gates, and from sculpture to light structural steel. ■