

Clippings are brief summaries of recent news articles in the consumer media. These stories offer a peek at how garage door companies and products are being reported to the public.

“The Perilous World of Garage Door Service”

Source: Dave Lieber, “Watchdog: Garage door repair company overcharges elderly,” *Dallas Morning News*, Dec. 6, 2014.

Dave Lieber is the consumer watchdog for the Dallas Morning News, one of the nation’s most-circulated newspapers. He reported the sad case of 76-year-old Mason Miller of Richardson, Texas. Miller simply wanted someone to help him program the garage door transmitter in his car, and he thought he was calling the authorized Overhead Door distributor in Dallas.

Instead, Miller fell into “the perilous world of Garage Door Service, a San Diego-based company that pretends it’s local in many cities, even though it isn’t.”

Lieber reported, “The tech charged him \$1,700 for a job that should have cost \$100 or less. When Miller complained later and tried to get his money back from the company, the company sent him a legal document to sign. The document stated that he would never say anything bad about the company. If he signed, he would get a \$700 refund.”

When Lieber tried to contact the company, he got a taste of Miller’s frustration. “The call center answers calls that arrive through a maddening array of hundreds of websites and also phone book ads that carry names similar to better-known and more reputable companies in the cities in which the imitator pretends to be based.”

“The company confuses by design,” Lieber wrote. “It uses hundreds of names so it’s hard to keep track. They include Overhead Garage Door Services, America’s Choice Garage Door Services, and AAA Allstate Overhead Door Corp. The parent company is Global Development Strategies, and the president is Marlene Anita Stephens.”

What did Miller get for his \$1,700? New springs, a motor adjustment, new rollers, and a new center bearing plate with new bearings, wrote Lieber.

The article quoted Gary Keown, president of Overhead Door Co. of Dallas, whom Miller wanted to call in the first place. “If somebody charges \$1,200 or \$1,500 to repair a door that costs \$700, there’s something wrong with that,” said Keown.

Editor’s Note: Since 2002, we have frequently learned of similar problems with this Garage Door Service(s) chain, and we have reported about it. We have also had conversations with Dave Lieber, who has reported about this company before. Point: This problem isn’t new, it’s not going away, and it may be getting worse.

“The tech charged him \$1,700 for a job that should have cost \$100 or less.”

Harrison Ford Injured in Garage Door Accident

Source: “Harrison Ford breaks ankle on Star Wars film set at Pinewood studios,” *BBC*, June 13, 2014.

You’ve heard about Harrison Ford’s plane crash on March 5. But last summer, Ford, then 71, was reported to have broken his ankle in England while filming the new Star Wars sequel, Episode VII.

Local police confirmed that a 71-year-old man had been injured in an incident involving a garage door. A spokeswoman for the ambulance company said they were called to an incident involving “a door that had fallen.”

Details of how the accident occurred are unclear, but the accident required Ford to be airlifted to a nearby hospital in Oxford.

Editor’s Note: A variety of causes could be behind this accident. Yet, it only takes one high-profile accident to turn the public spotlight on our industry.

New Invention Prevents Dents in Garage Doors

Source: Brent Davis, “SportScreen takes a dent out of battered garage doors,” *Waterloo (Ontario) Region Record*, July 9, 2014.

“A pockmarked garage door ... doesn’t do much for the home’s curb appeal,” said this news report about an invention that would prevent dents from baseballs, hockey pucks, and others sports activity.

“A pockmarked garage door ... doesn’t do much for the home’s curb appeal.”

The invention is the SportScreen, a powered roll-up protective screen made of an open-mesh polyester fabric. Mounted

outside the garage door

opening, it can be used when the garage door is open or closed and is available up to 20’ wide.

After trying several prototypes, the start-up online company (www.thesportscreen.ca) settled into standard sizes with prices that start at \$399 USD. Sales doubled from about \$50,000 in the first year to about \$100,000 in the second.

Editor’s note: Such screens usually just keep out bugs. This one’s obviously much stronger. It seems to meet a need in this Canadian community; does it meet a real consumer need in your market?