

Advice, guidance, steps to follow and information on what to do when your manual garage door will not open

The one thing that can be virtually guaranteed in life is that if something is going to go wrong, it will occur at the time you least need it to happen. What's more, what can be a simple problem can easily escalate into a full-blown crisis because you don't take a few minutes to establish the cause. So when you're late for that appointment and the garage door refuses to budge with your car inside, what do you do?

Well, the short answer is don't force it open because you will probably do greater damage and end up with a larger bill than you expected. So having established that the door is not going to move, check exactly what the situation is.



Firstly, is the garage door the only way into your garage, or is there a service door that you can walk through to get

inside? If the garage door is the only entrance, then you can probably save yourself a lot of heartache by ringing us straight away and requesting an emergency call-out, because we not only have the expertise, but also the special tools needed to open that door whilst causing the minimum of damage to it. Having rung us and got an estimated time of arrival, call your appointment and explain you won't be on time, then make yourself a cup of tea whilst you await our arrival. We guarantee we will have that door open for you within half an hour of arrival, enabling you to be on your way while we complete any repairs that are necessary.

If you are able to get into the garage by another door, then there are some simple checks you can make before you ring us.

Is the handle lock working? If the key will not turn in the lock to unlock it, then do not force or it will likely snap off in the lock. If the lock is jammed, then the mechanism will not operate whatever you do; the lock will need to be replaced first.

If the handle is unlocked, is it turning? If the handle turns, does it stop when you expect it to, or is it just spinning freely? If the latter, then it has probably become detached from the release mechanism, so the door will not unlatch from the outside.

In either of the above cases, you will probably be able to open the door from the inside because the mechanism incorporates an internal handle that operates independently of the exterior handle. Enter the garage by the side door, then you can open the main door using the internal handle; you can continue to use the door this way until you have the lock and or handle connection repaired. Both jobs are relatively simple, and we would normally be able to do either as part of a standard call-out visit.

If the external handle doesn't move at all then the release mechanism may be jammed – again, don't force it from the outside as this could cause more damage.

If the handle moves normally and you can feel the mechanism operating, but the door still refuses to open normally, the next thing to check is whether the door itself is jammed. So enter by the side door and make some more checks:

Firstly, we all keep all manner of items in our garage, and it is not unusual for any of these to move due to air drafts or vibration. So has anything fallen against the inside of the door, or into any part of the mechanism causing it to jam? If so, carefully remove the obstruction and open the door.

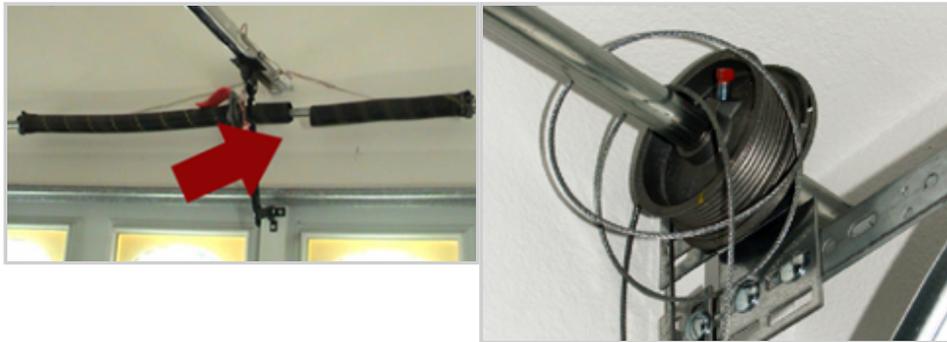
Next check the latching mechanism. When you operate it internally, do all the latching points disconnect? If they don't, then you may have a broken connecting rod or cable, or a latch may be seized. These will need to be repaired before the door can be opened.

If the latches disconnect properly but the door will not move, then there is a problem with the actual door operating mechanism. If the door has a tracked mechanism, visually check to see that all of the door rollers are still engaged internally within the tracks. If any are outside of the track, then the door has become detached. You should not try to move it, as it will probably fall off completely. This would be a good time to put an emergency call into us, as all of our engineers carry the appropriate equipment to remedy this situation for you.

If the rollers are fully-engaged, are the tracks themselves bent or broken, or is there any scratching that may indicate that some of the moving components are seized. Again, if there are problems here, the components will need replacing

If these components look OK, then there is likely to be some damage to the door springs. Once again, take care not to force the door, as it is a very heavy object – the reason it doesn't normally feel that heavy is because the springs act as counterweights, making it easier to lift.

Take a look at the door springs. They will be mounted either horizontally along a shaft above the door, or vertically at each side of the door. Are they in one piece? If any are broken, then there will be no assistance to open the door. Also check the cables which again are either side of the door. If any are broken, then the effect will be the same.



It may still be possible to lift the door with broken springs or cables, but it will be heavy and may become detached. So it is better to have assistance opening it, because you could easily injure yourself trying to lift a door with broken springs; worse still, if the door has become detached from part of its mechanism, it can fall off. This will cause damage to anything underneath it – including you!

Even when fully-open, any door with broken springs or cables will likely fall back down again if not supported. A door with broken springs will fall quickly and heavily so, in this circumstance, be sure that the door can be supported or propped open before driving your car out.