

Automatic Doors: Open to Safety and More Sales

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Marketing a retail operation is a complex undertaking. Today's brick and mortar establishments are not only up against competitors down the street, but also an entire universe of online shopping sites. To be effective today, more than ever, operators must study their customer base so they can thoroughly comprehend and anticipate their wants and needs. This understanding helps operators keep the door open for their customers.

In typical retail environments where expected users are often shoppers carrying packages, parents pushing strollers and various individuals of all ages and physical capabilities, automatic doors are an ideal choice. Furthermore, current research from The American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers tells us that 98.9 percent of consumers who expressed a preference between automatic and manual doors prefer automatic doors, and they expect to find automatic doors in retail establishments.

When properly selected, installed and maintained, automatic doors are a safe, convenient feature that demonstrates superb customer service with every open door. Welcoming your customers with an open door starts with proper selection of the right automatic door for your business.

Selection

Factors that should be considered when selecting an automatic door include the type and quantity of users you expect to enter and exit your location on a regular basis, desired traffic flow, building layout, required door opening size and aesthetic preferences.. There are three main types of automatic doors: swinging, sliding and folding.

- **Automatic Sliding Doors:** Automatic sliding doors enable efficient two-way traffic through a single door. With automatic sliding doors, space is a consideration since they require an adequate amount of room in which the door can slide.
- **Automatic Swinging Doors:** When a swinging door is automated, usually, two doors are required in order to allow two-way traffic. One door swings inward and the other door swings outward.
- **Automatic Folding Doors:** One advantage of bi-folding doors is that they require minimal space to install, while still providing a sufficient amount of clear door space. This space-conserving benefit makes folding doors a popular choice for retail locations where space is limited.

With any type of automatic door, there are vital things to remember and proactive measures to take to ensure safe and trouble-free operation.

Installation

Some Key Installation Considerations

Sliding Doors: It is imperative that sliding doors be equipped with the emergency swing feature for code compliance.

Swinging doors: The American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers (AAADM) advises that two-way traffic through a single automatic swinging door is not generally recommended. The exception to this is in the case of a low-energy swing operator that has different characteristics than a fully automatic door. It is crucial that these types of doors are well marked to indicate their direction of travel. A minimum of 11 feet of space between the two doors is suggested to give some separation and to eliminate sensor interference between the two doors.

Folding Doors: If the folding doors in your location are being used for egress, they should be equipped with an emergency swing feature.

Bear in mind that while it is extremely important to follow the guidelines outlined above, this does not encompass a comprehensive plan for overall door safety. Every application has its own unique set of conditions and considerations based on the expected setting and use; therefore, it is important that retailers work with an established and reputable manufacturer who has a complete understanding of the layout, traffic patterns and users of your retail facility.

Compliance with Standards

Regardless of the type of door that is used, ensure that the door system complies with ANSI/BHMA A156.10, the American National Standard for Power Operated Pedestrian Doors. AAADM members comply with this standard, and AAADM Certified Inspectors can verify that an installation is in compliance. A list of the Association's members is available at www.aaadm.com, as is a list of companies throughout the country that employ certified inspectors.

Planned Maintenance

Planned maintenance of your automatic doors is an important component to safety. Work with your manufacturer to choose a program that is right for you. When selecting a planned-maintenance program, you and your manufacturer should consider the number of automatic doors in your facility, the age of the doors and customer traffic. Most manufacturers offer a variety of planned-maintenance programs.

A portion of the responsibility for automatic door safety lies with building owners and operators. An individual or individuals at your facility should be charged with performing brief daily safety checks of each door at a designated time each day. Safety checks should also be performed following power outages or any other time power to the door has been shut off.

Tips for Performing a Daily Safety Checks

With swinging doors, two employees should perform the daily inspection. One should stand in the safety area—while the other steps onto the activating mat or into the sensor beam. The door should not open as long as anyone is in the safety area. If activation mats are used, step on each section of each mat to confirm proper functioning.

For doors with electronic sensors, check the sensor by walking toward the door opening at a moderate rate of speed. Do several approaches from various angles, and step in and out of the sensor beam several times from different directions.

For doors with electronic holding beams, cover the beam and stand motionless to make sure the door remains open. Uncover the beam to make sure the door closes after a brief delay.

For doors with electronic sensors and holding beams, perform tests standing upright as well as in a crouch position.

Automatic doors should slide or swing open smoothly and stop without impact. As you move through the door, it should remain open. When you step off the activation mat, the door should close smoothly after a brief delay. Stop in the doorway for several seconds. The door should remain open.

For two-way doors, repeat the inspection procedure from both approaches.

Always exercise caution when performing daily safety checks.

AAADM provides a video presentation on daily safety check procedures. Premises owners can use this video to train or retrain employees to perform daily safety checks correctly. Printed material is also available from AAADM. For more information, visit www.aaadm.com

Closing Points

With proper selection, installation, annual inspections by AAADM -certified inspectors, and daily safety checks by premises owners, automatic doors provide safe, convenient access for every customer.

Founded in 1994, AAADM is an industry trade association dedicated to promoting safety in the manufacture and operation of automatic doors. AAADM has developed inspection procedures and a training and certification program for automatic door system inspectors. The Association's members meet regularly to review and update its certification program and standards for automatic door systems. AAADM recommends utilizing AAADM-certified technicians to install and service any automatic doors in your facility.