

Opening the Door to Independence

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The primary feature that makes automatic swing doors so popular in schools is the ease of use in ADA applications. Children, particularly those using walkers or wheelchairs, are confronted daily with the challenges around every corner and at every doorway.

Struggling with heavy manual doors can throw kids off balance and result in falls and injuries. Because of their decreased mobility and difficulty performing some physical tasks, those identified groups may benefit greatly from the use of automatic doors. They allow the children to pass through the door without having to wait for a teacher or other staff member to hold it open.

The decision to use automatic doors carries the responsibility to make sure they are maintained properly to reduce the risk of someone being injured by a low energy swing door operator, opening too fast, or not staying open the proper amount of time.



The American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers (AAADM) has put together important safety guidelines:

- The automatic door should be properly specified to suit the intended use and the proper ANSI standard (ANSI A156.10 Standard for Power Operated

Doors or ANSI A156.19 Standard for Power Assist and Low Energy Power Operated Doors) should be followed.

- Automatic and power-assisted doors should be installed by a qualified technician and inspected by an AAADM certified inspector.
- Preventative maintenance and a daily inspection are strongly recommended. Daily safety procedures are outlined on a label affixed to the frame.
- Doors should be properly marked as automatic.
- Door closing speed and force should be adjusted for the intended user. Time delay should be set and activating devices properly positioned and adjusted.

Children with disabilities are often challenged by their physical surroundings. For those walker and wheelchair dependent students, opening manual doors is sometimes an impossible task. The presence of well chosen automatic and power-assisted doors can promote independent mobility and a better educational experience for every student.

It is up to those administrators in charge of the facilities departments in their respective school districts to make sure that the automatic doors comply with the requirements set in the standards. Properly maintained automatic doors reduce the potential risk of a child being injured due to a door that has not been properly inspected.

Jared D. Amato is co-owner of Oregon Door Consultants LLC. A mission of his organization brings public awareness to the risks of not properly inspecting and maintaining automatic doors. You can reach him directly at 503.314.3412 or Jared@OregonDoorConsultants.com