

The Importance of Maintenance Powered Gates

A consumer leaflet produced by DHF



Introduction

An automated driveway gate will be convenient, enhance your home and can increase your home security. Making sure that it is correctly specified, installed and maintained is essential to ensure that it will be safe for your family, visitors, delivery personnel and passers by. Legally, automated gates are classed as machinery, as such they must be provided with adequate safety to ensure that all people who may be affected are not put at risk.

Although a properly installed and maintained automated gate system is highly unlikely to cause an incident, several deaths, injuries, near misses and prosecutions have tragically occurred in the past 20 years, many involving young children. All were easily avoidable; none were in any way inevitable and could have been avoided.



The criminal law (prosecution)

The criminal laws affecting supply and maintenance are stringent. Any company who installs or works on your gate must ensure that it is safe on completion of the work:

1. The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008 (which enforce the EU Machinery Directive in the UK) require that automated gate systems are safe when installed and are provided with sufficient operation and maintenance instructions that they can remain safe in use. Gate systems, like cars and boilers or any other piece of equipment, require regular maintenance and safety checks. Without this critical work, a gate system could easily become unreliable and, more importantly, unsafe.

2. The UK Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Northern Ireland Health and Safety at Work Order 1979, and the Republic of Ireland Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005 place a criminal responsibility on companies installing and maintaining gate systems to ensure that unsafe systems are not left in service.

The civil law (negligence)

There are also civil legal considerations for an owner to consider. In this world of blame culture and the proliferation of 'no-win-no-fee' lawyers just waiting for the opportunity to sue, it is important to consider the legal implications of having an unsafe gate system on your property. Any person who by their actions, or inaction, causes injury to persons or property, could face legal action for negligence, including a private domestic householder.

Installation

DHF member companies that provide automated gate installation can be located on the DHF [website](#) by using the search facility and entering your postcode.

Maintenance

As automated gate maintenance is a specialist activity, it requires training, knowledge and experience coupled with specific test equipment. DHF urges all owners and managers of automated gate systems to ensure that they contract a properly qualified specialist company to perform regular planned maintenance.

The required frequency of maintenance should be explained in your operation and maintenance manual but, in any case, it should be sufficient and reflect the design of the system, the environmental exposure of the site, the frequency of operation and the vulnerability of users and passers-by so at least annually but maybe more on more intensively used systems. Without regular inspection, cleaning, lubrication, adjustment and safety testing, your gate system will deteriorate.

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Safety standards

So, how safe does an automated gate need to be? The relevant standards, BS EN 12453 in the UK and IS EN 12453 in the Republic of Ireland, have been around since 2001 without significant change to the safety requirements. The system must be structurally sound (the most common death and injury incidents involve gates falling on people), be electrically safe, have a fail-to-safe control system, and have all reducing gaps and impact hazards protected against injuring people. Movement of the gate must be protected such that all reducing gaps and personal impact potentials are either not possible or will cause the gate to reverse movement within strict force and time limits where it can touch a person. Where force limitation is used, this must also be supplemented by beams designed to reduce the possibility of such force limited contact. These beams are not the primary safety. They are secondary to the requirement to limit force; they are however integral to safety and compliance.

Vehicle safety must also be considered to avoid damage to vehicles. Although this is not a matter of the criminal laws that are intended to protect people, it is still of course important to protect against vehicle damage. Vehicle safety can be

achieved to some degree by the beams used to supplement force limitation for people, additional systems and strategies are also possible depending on how the system will operate and who will use it for vehicle access. These include vehicle detectors, additional beams, user controls, user instructions and signage for drivers.

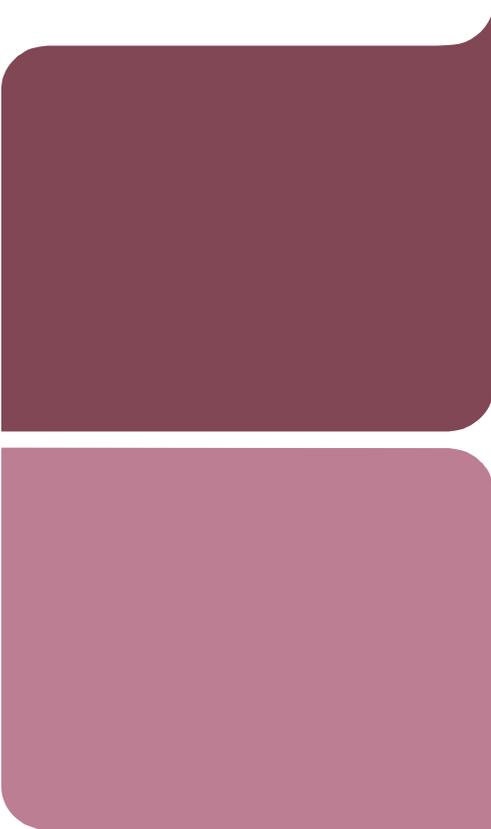
To make life simpler for everyone involved, DHF has published a detailed Code of Practice, TS 013 that is split into three parts: on-site guide to system safety, legislation for installation & maintenance companies, and advice for owners. The DHF code does not introduce any new rules, it simply explains how to comply with the relevant legislation and standards. Download part 3 free [here](#).

DHF urges all householders to ensure their gates are safe for adult users, children, pets, visitors, delivery people, passers by and vehicles that may be affected by the moving gate.

DHF TS 013 - 3: 2021– Code of practice for the safety of industrial doors, garage doors & traffic barriers

Part 3: Guidance for professional owners and managers





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