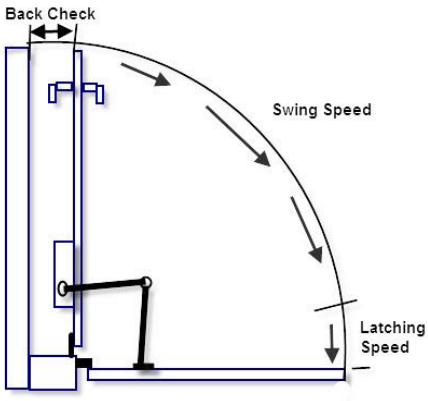
City of Bloomington
COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY
www.bloomington.in.gov/cca

Door Poundage Guidelines

Doors present some of the most common accessibility issues. Heavy doors are especially difficult for people with disabilities and seniors with limited upper body strength and/or skills in using their hands. People who move slowly or use mobility devices like wheelchairs or walkers may not be able to pass through doors that close too quickly. Luckily, these common problems can often be resolved by simply adjusting door closers. Follow these steps to make sure your doors are accessible to all.

1. Measure Door Opening Force and Closing Speed

The best way to measure door opening force is by using a door force gauge, also called a door pressure gauge or door poundage gauge. The Council for Community Accessibility has a gauge. You may request for them to come and test yours if you're concerned it may be too heavy.



- Interior doors should require **no more than 5 pounds of force** to open according to ADA standards. This does not apply to the initial force needed to overcome the weight of a motionless door. Open the door gradually; do not "jerk" it open.
- While the ADA does not regulate opening force for exterior doors, they should have as minimum a force as possible. The industry standard for maximum opening force of exterior doors ranges from 8.5 to 10 pounds. Any door so difficult that it prevents entrance by people with disabilities may deny them access to goods and services, which *is* covered under the ADA.
- The closing or swing speed must not be faster than five seconds. The closing or swing distance is from the open position at 90 degrees to 12 degrees from the latch.

2. Determine the Problem and Simplest Solution

- Check to see if the problem is due to warping of the door or door frame, loose weather stripping or threshold, or door hinges that need tightening or lubricating.
- Check to see what type of closer is installed. Most closers are mounted at the top of a door or above it on the jamb. However, some doors use internal models hidden inside the door frame.
- Check to see if the closer is damaged or leaking oil.
- Check to see if the closer is still under warranty. Adjusting or repairing it may void or cancel your warranty.
- Decide whether to adjust or replace the door closer, hinges, or weather stripping.

To adjust the latch or sweep speed:

- Be sure to refer to the closer's maintenance manual before trying to make adjustments.

City of Bloomington Council for Community Accessibility
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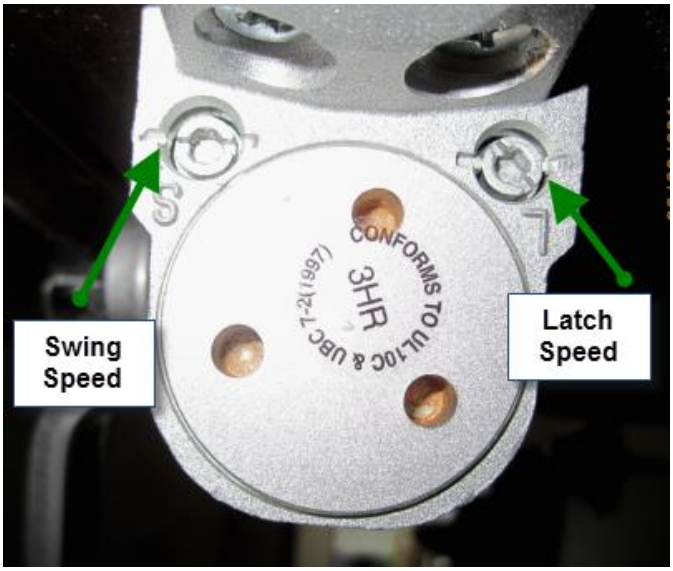
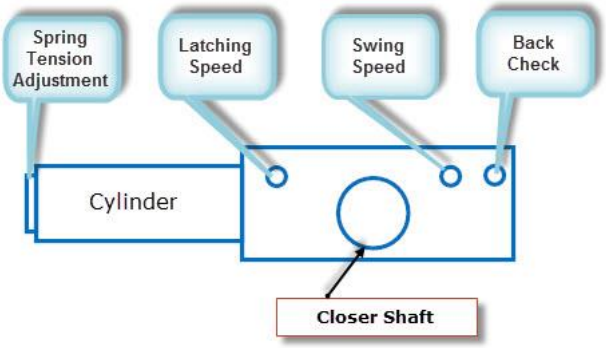
- Ask building maintenance staff for help when possible.
- Mechanical door closers use the hydraulic force provided by the user to shut the door after it is opened. Most closers allow you to adjust the speed and power of the door.
- Insert a 1/8-inch Allen wrench or screwdriver in the appropriate set screw. Turn it clockwise to reduce the speed, counterclockwise to increase the speed. The set screws are usually located on the end of the closer.



Typical Symbols on a Closer

- "S"- Swing Speed: adjustment for the long swing of the door.
- "L" - Latch Speed: adjustment for the short final swing of the door.
- "BC" - Back Check: adjustment to limit/slow the maximum swing of the door.



For more information about accessibility requirements for doors (and facilities):

U.S. Department of Justice:
http://www.ada.gov

2010 ADA Standards:
http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm