



GARAGE IMAGE GETTY • CHAIN IMAGE TOM FENENGA

# BURGLAR-PROOF YOUR GARAGE

Is your  
garage  
door  
an easy  
entrance?

Most homeowners close the overhead garage door and assume they've locked out bad guys. And they're mostly correct; a garage door connected to an opener is pretty secure. But there are a few ways that crooks might get through your door. This article will show you how they do it—and how to stop them.



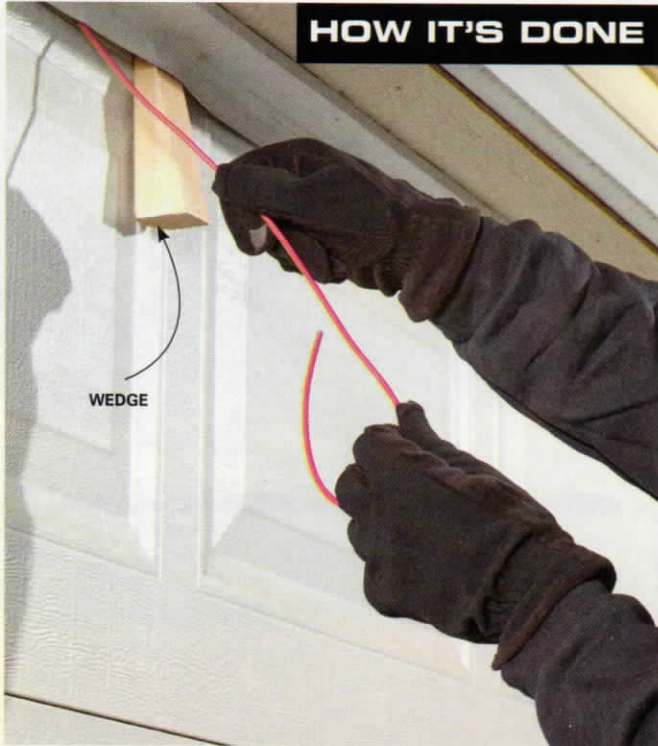
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# Prevent fishing

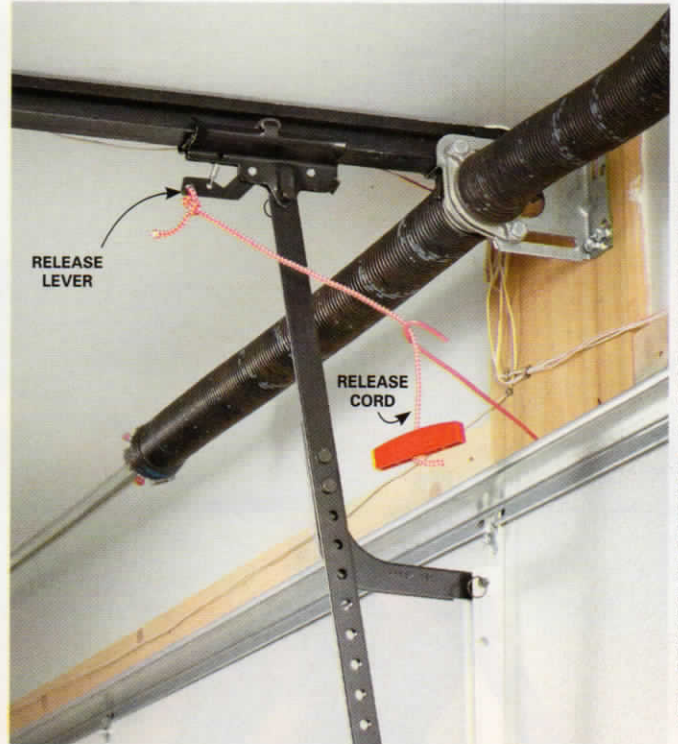
Every garage door opener has an emergency release that disconnects the door from the opener. Without it, you wouldn't be able to open the door when the opener is on the fritz. But some clever crooks have turned this essential feature into a security risk.

"Fishing" a garage door isn't exactly easy, and in some situations it's almost impossible. Some openers, for example, have a release mechanism that must be pulled straight down and won't release if the cord is tugged at an angle toward the door. Others are a bit easier to fish, especially if your garage door has a window that allows the crook to see what he's doing.



## PUSH AND PROBE

By pushing the door inward to create a gap at the top, a crook can insert a wire hook and fish for the release. Some use a wedge to hold the gap open.



## HOOK AND PULL

Once the cord is hooked, all it takes is a good yank to disconnect the door from the opener. On some models, hooking the release lever works too.

## 2 WAYS TO PREVENT IT

### Make a shield

A shield makes grabbing the release cord almost impossible. This shield is simply a wood cleat and a scrap of plywood screwed to the opener's arm. The plywood is fastened to the cleat with just two brad nails, so it can break away—rather than do damage—if it runs into something while the door is traveling.



### Add a tie

If your trolley has a pair of holes, you can lock the release with a small plastic tie. Use the smallest tie you can find. It will be strong enough to resist the tug of a fishing wire but will break away with a hard pull on the release cord.

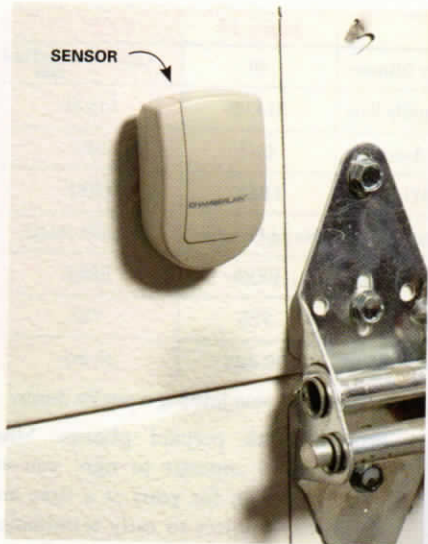


# Don't forget to close the door

Lots of garages get looted simply because someone forgot to close the door. A **garage door monitor** (about \$30) is a good reminder. Just stick the sensor to the door and set the monitor in a conspicuous spot like your nightstand. To find a monitor, search online for "garage door monitor." The brand of your door or opener doesn't

matter; any monitor will work.

An **automatic door closer** (\$45 and up) provides even more security, since it closes the door whether you're home or not. Installation requires some simple low-voltage wiring and takes less than an hour. To find one, search online for "automatic garage door closer."



## GARAGE DOOR MONITOR

The sensor sends a signal to the monitor, telling you whether the door is open or closed. Both units are battery-operated—no wiring is required.



## AUTOMATIC DOOR CLOSER

This device allows the door to stay open for a set amount of time, then closes it. You set the timer and can override it on those summer days when you're working in the garage.

## MORE WAYS TO LOCK OUT CROOKS

- **Beef up the service door.** The walk-through entry door (called the "service door") is the No. 1 security weak spot in most garages. It should be equipped with a dead bolt and a heavy-duty strike plate, just like any other exterior door in your house.
- **Lock the entry door.** If you have an attached garage, lock the entry door that leads into the house. Too many homeowners rely on the service door and leave the entry door unlocked.
- **Cover windows.** If crooks can't see the tools and toys in your garage, they won't be motivated to get in. Sheer curtains or translucent window film lets in light but keeps valuables out of sight.
- **Add lighting.** Bright lighting makes burglars nervous and just might make them go elsewhere. Motion detector lighting is better than on-all-night lighting because it saves energy when it's off and attracts attention when it's on.
- **Get more security tips for your garage and home at [familyhandyman.com](http://familyhandyman.com).** Search for "security."

## DON'T KEEP THE CLICKER IN YOUR CAR

A thief who breaks into your car can grab the remote for easy access to your garage. This isn't just a problem when your car is parked in the driveway; the registration card in your glove box gives a crook your address. So get rid of the remote on your visor and buy a keychain remote (\$25 and up). You can easily take it with you every time you leave the car. Home centers stock only a small selection of remotes, but you'll find more online. Start your search by typing in the brand of your opener, followed by "remote."

