

Making the ASTM F2200 Gate Construction Standard work for you

Editor's note: We have been receiving calls regarding the ASTM F2200 Gate Construction Standard. This standard was developed by a coalition of parties within the gate and access control industries, and is now a consensus standard of ASTM International. While UL 325 addresses safety features of the gate operators themselves, the F2200 standard addresses the overall automated gate system installation, with the aim of ensuring that proper safeguards are designed into it. The following is a Q&A format column developed by Rick Sedivy of DoorKing, who has been closely involved in all phases of its development.

People outside our industry often underestimate the power of a motorized vehicular gate. Knowing the potential hazard of a moving gate, a coalition of industry experts developed ASTM F2200, the Gate Construction Standard. (Editor's note: Even though the standard was published in 2002, and since updated, most within the industry agree that more education on, and dissemination of, the standard is needed.)

We hope the following questions and answers will help you (1) comply with the standard, (2) promote good business practices, and (3) implement safer and better operation of motorized vehicular gates.

Q: Isn't a standard for gate operators (UL 325) enough?

A: No. The UL 325 standard is intended to address the operator. UL 325 addresses some aspects of the vehicular gate, but other potential hazards are not addressed.

UL and the Consumer Product Safety Commission recognized this in the late 1990s when they challenged the industry to create the document now known as ASTM F2200.

Q: Doesn't the standard complicate the task of designing and building a gate system?

A: Not at all. Designers who specify UL 325 listed and labeled gate operators should already be familiar with some of the provisions in ASTM F2200, since it has been harmonized with UL 325.

Designers just need to be aware of the additional provisions in ASTM F2200 that address certain gaps, height of barbed tape/barbed wire, and protrusions. These additional provisions are explained in simple terms.

Some companies have told us that conformance to the standard is very straightforward. But if it seems complicated, companies should make a concerted effort on education.

Some companies have used information published by the Door and Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) to educate internal staff on how to conform to both UL 325 and F2200.

Q: Why do we need to build to F2200 if it is not a federal law?

A: Complying with F2200 makes good business sense. Remember, the standard is now in the public domain, and is here to stay. We firmly believe that conformance to the standard will reduce serious accidents and the liability that goes with them.

A company's use or non-use of the standard reflects on the company's business practices.

If an accident occurs involving a gate that you could have installed conforming to the standard, and the standard was not followed, your day in court may be difficult.

Conversely, you may be dismissed from such a case if the gate was found to conform.

We have noticed that bigger and heavier gates are being specified, particularly for gated communities. Bigger gates can mean more potential for injury and greater liability.

We have also seen communities that have refused to request gates con-

forming to ASTM F2200. They sometimes reason that the gates should be "built the way they've always been built." But today's gates should be installed according to today's safety standards.

We live in a changing society where litigation is ever on the increase. Smart businesses stay current with technology and with the latest safety standards.

To conclude, we highly recommend the following:

1. Obtain and review a copy of the standard. Contact ASTM or ask your gate operator supplier to educate you on the content of the standard.

2. Develop within your company an educational program on the standard. You can use helpful DASMA publications as well as publications from your gate operator supplier.

3. Stay abreast of the latest activities concerning the standard. If your gate operator supplier is a DASMA member, your supplier is likely well informed of the latest developments.

4. Work with your gate operator supplier. Be aware of the relationship between UL 325, ASTM F2200 and the technology your supplier has built into its products.

5. Know the local requirements applying to each job.

In the state of Nevada, for instance, the law requires that gate systems include operators that comply with UL 325.

Other local codes, laws, or ordinances may require gates and operators to comply with the standards or provisions contained in the standards.

6. Develop an installation checklist. List all of the safety related provisions contained in ASTM F2200, and review them with your customers.

7. Compile informational materials to share with your customers. Choose information relevant to the specific job, and highlight important information.

Note: Where applicable, ASTM F2200 standards include the following requirements:

- Covers for all exposed rollers.
- Protective screen mesh.
- Guard posts.
- Slide gates and the adjacent fence must not allow a 2¼-inch sphere to pass through, up 48 inches above the ground.
- Gates must be prevented from falling over if disconnected from the gate opener.
- Swing gates with potential entrapment zones of greater than 4 inches

to less than 16 inches must be protected.

- Swing gates must not have any protrusions on the bottom of the gate.

Of course, this is only the briefest of summaries of the standard. Refer to ASTM F2200 for complete information. You can order this and other standards from ASTM International at 610-832-9585, fax 610-832-9555, or visit www.astm.org.

DASMA also offers some valuable information. Contact the organization at 216-241-7333, fax 216-241-0105, or visit the company's web site located at

www.dasma.com.

DASMA is North America's leading trade association of manufacturers of garage doors, rolling doors, garage door operators, vehicular gate operators, and access control products.

ASTM International is one of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world. Standards developed at ASTM are the work of over 30,000 ASTM members. These technical experts represent producers, users, consumers, government and academia from over 100 countries.