

Rolling Steel (Coiling) Doors vs. Section Doors

Although they are sometimes considered to be interchangeable, there are dramatic differences between Rolling Steel and Sectional Doors. Some of these differences are based on material, with Rolling Steel doors generally having heavier duty, sustainable construction. Also, Rolling Steel Doors have mounting advantages that make them uniquely suitable for specific applications. Cornell strongly recommends that Rolling Steel Doors be considered over Section for the following reasons:

- Heavy duty commercial/industrial grade Rolling Steel Doors are built to last the lifetime of the building with very little cost of maintenance, where sectional garage doors typically have a life expectancy of only a few years with significant maintenance cost.
- Sectional garage doors have 30 to 40 moving parts that are all exposed and subject to dirt, debris and damage. Any of these parts, if faulty or damaged, will cause the door to become completely inoperable and/or pose a serious life safety risk.
 - Sectional garage doors are raised by lifting cables. These thin wire ropes often fray and eventually break resulting in the real possibility of the door free falling.
 - Sectional door hinges are typically made of inexpensive metal stampings that are prone to wear and premature failure.
 - Sectional door rollers bind up and seize.
 - Sectional door torsion springs are exposed to the environment resulting in corrosion, and/or exposure to extreme temperatures. Any of these can cause a reduction in spring life. In comparison, rolling steel doors have a heavy duty steel curtain that coils upon the counterbalance shaft. Their heavy duty springs are protected and sealed inside the counterbalance shaft and heavily coated with grease to eliminate the possibility of rust or freezing.
 - Rolling Steel Doors have many fewer parts than sectional doors, with less risk for damage and inoperability making them a better solution for facilities that cannot afford opening downtime.
- Indiscriminant employees often over exert downward pressure on a sectional door, slamming it closed. This action normally causes the counter balance cables to jump off their simple housing, necessitating a service call.
- The exposure of the counterbalance cables on sectional doors makes them a danger to any user. The cables are under extreme tension, and when these cables break or are cut by an employee the cables can severely injure anyone in the vicinity.
- An insulated coiling door can be powder coated one color on the exterior face of the curtain and powder coated another color on the interior face. A sectional door must be field painted if multiple colors are desired.
- Sectional garage doors are normally made from much lighter gauge materials. For example, the 24" tall panels are typically 24 gauge or nominal 24 gauge, where rolling steel curtains are made of individual 3" tall slats of 22 to 18 gauge material. The guides of a commercial

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sectional garage door are typically roll-formed 16 or 14 gauge, where rolling steel guides are typically made from 3/16" to 1/2" thick structural steel angles. The lighter weight materials of a sectional garage door are much more susceptible to damage in a commercial or industrial environment.

- When a sectional garage door is impacted by a forklift or other vehicle, the door is typically left inoperable for 7-10 working days, while the service company orders 24" sections from the factory of the exact size and type required. A heavy duty Rolling Steel Door can be made with removable guide sections and extra curtain material that is stored and hidden inside the hood. When hit by a vehicle, a rolling steel door can be repaired and back in a single service call lasting 30 minutes or less.
- Sectional garage doors typically float up and overhead into the building. If the overhead track is impacted the door panels can be dislodged will come crashing to the ground. In many facilities with dozens of employees working in and around these doors, this is a potential life safety hazard. A heavy duty Rolling Steel Door mounts tightly to the wall. The curtain wraps tightly around the counterbalance shaft and covered by a steel hood, and if the door is impacted there is no danger of the door or parts of the door falling.
- Coiling doors are mounted to the face of the wall and supported by the vertical wall and require no connection to the ceiling or roof structure. Sectional garage doors are typically mounted to the vertical face of the wall, but the horizontal track must be supported from the ceiling or roof structure. This creates multiple challenges for the architect and owner:
 - Most ceilings are not designed to support the weight of the sectional door in the open and horizontal position.
 - All lighting, HVAC, fire sprinklers and other materials must be located outside of this large space in front of the opening.
 - The area inside the building in front of the opening cannot be used for storage.
- Sectional garage doors have operable panels normally 24" tall. When the door is operating, these panels hinge and separate, creating a potential pinch point. Since the creation of this product, there have been thousands of cases where people have been seriously injured when their hair or other body parts get between these panels during operation of the door. With a Rolling Steel Door, there is no such issue.
- Building maintenance engineers who are charged with ensuring that all openings are in service at all times will choose a heavy duty Rolling Steel Door over a sectional garage door every time. The main reason is that the cost of a sectional garage door at bid time may be less, but over the first 10 years the building owner will spend on average 5 times more to keep the sectional door working than the heavy duty Rolling Steel.
- Cornell's network of independent installing distributors are full service companies that will provide warranty, maintenance and repair services to a building owner once they have taken occupancy. Over 10 years, a Cornell distributor stands to make more money from servicing

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the sectional doors than installing rolling steel doors. Despite this fact, Cornell distributors would prefer to provide the best and most appropriate product for this application, which often is a heavy duty Rolling Steel product.

From our years of experience providing, installing and repairing both sectional garage doors and heavy duty rolling steel, Cornell recommends that the architect and building owner seriously consider the advantages of Rolling Steel Doors. Please contact Cornell if you require further explanation about this subject, or your local [Cornell Distributor](#) for product pricing to meet your project requirements.