

Door Closer Maintenance for Apartment Doors

Apartments doors are fire rated doors and functionally they are meant to be closed and latched shut so in the event of an apartment fire it will be contained to that apartment.

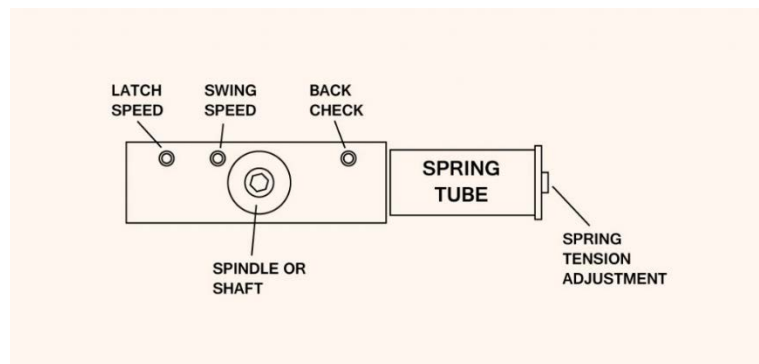
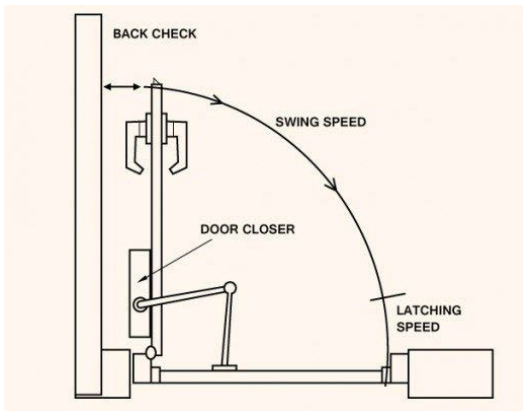
A door closer is a mechanical device designed to always close a door slowly but firmly enough for it to latch.

Over time the door closer found in an apartments entry do need adjusting generally to prevent the door slamming closed. This (especially when it happens late at night) is a noise which reverberates often to the annoyance of other residential apartments close by.

The process to adjust these units is relatively straight forward however often requiring a bit of understanding how they work and a bit of patience to adjust.

There are primarily four adjustments on door closers, the first two noted being the usual ones;

1. "S"wing speed adjustment - the first speed
2. "L"atching speed adjustment - the second speed
3. "Spring Tension" adjustment, and
4. Back Check "BC" adjustment



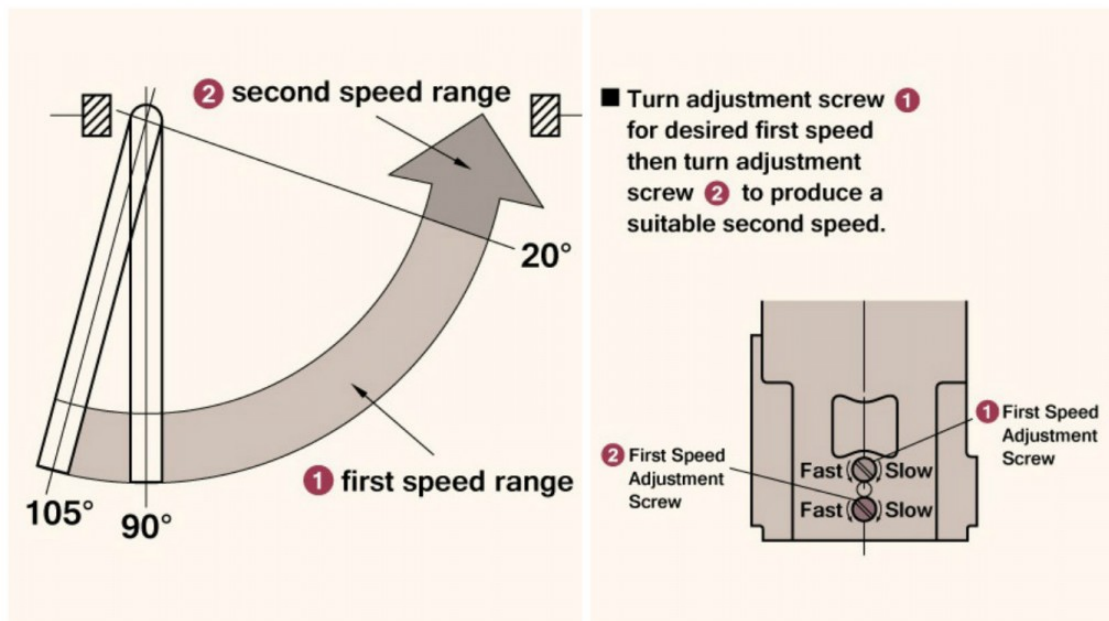
Quick Adjustment Overview

1. A small clockwise CW adjustment the "S" or "L" adjustment screws will slow the door swing, If the adjustments screws on the closer are not labeled, then adjust one to identify which adjustment ("S" or "L") is being made.
2. Adjust "S" first, then "L"
3. The Spring Tension provides the strength to ensure the door latches; this adjustment is generally factory set.
4. The "BC" can be adjusted to prevent the door opening too far

A fuller instruction set follows next page - sourced from dengarden.com

TO ADJUST THE DOOR CLOSER:

1. Bring a step ladder tall enough so that you can easily reach the door closer from the second- or third-highest step.
2. Climb the ladder and examine the closer. If you can't see adjustment screws, chances are the closer has a cover. Usually the cover is plastic, but it could also be metal. If you see no fasteners holding the cover on, that means the cover is held on by tension. Pull it off. If you do see fasteners, usually you can loosen, but not remove, the fasteners and the cover will slide off.
3. If you find that there is oil in the cover or oil on or leaking from the closer body, stop right now. You need a new door closer. If, however, it is not leaking, you can proceed.
4. Now that you have the cover off, you should be able to see the adjustment screws. If you are lucky, they will be marked on the closer body as to what they are or there will be a diagram inside the cover. If not, you may have to experiment a little to see which is which.
5. Remember, when it comes to turning door closer adjustment screws, a little goes a long way. Start with no more than 1/8 of a turn. Turn the adjustment screw clockwise to slow the door closer down, counter-clockwise to speed it up, then get down off the ladder and observe the effect.
6. Open the door and watch it close. If it closes right the first time, check it 10 more times. If it closes correctly every time, you're done. If not, go back up the ladder and make another adjustment, until the closer is doing what you want it to do.
7. When it closes the way you want 10 times in a row, it will probably continue to do so.



PROBLEMS AND TROUBLE SHOOTING

1. If you expect a door closer to consistently close the door, the door must be able to close properly. If there is a hinge problem, a warped door, or the door must swing uphill to close, a door closer will only go so far to solve the problem. Sometimes a door must be repaired before it will close and lock automatically with a door closer.
2. In vestibule conditions there is an exterior door, a small space, and then an interior door. The trapped air between the inside and outside door can be a factor in door closing. You may have to adjust both closers to get both to work correctly. Wherever air pressure is a factor, including negative or positive pressure situations, I have been able to get door closers to close and latch the door consistently by adjusting them to a slow swing-speed and a somewhat fast latch-speed. The slow swing-speed seems to give the air a chance to get out of the way and the fast latch speed gives it a very slight slam at the end to make sure it latches.
3. If the closer stops closing the door before it's closed all the way, or actually springs back when you try to manually shut the door, the arm is probably installed on the shaft incorrectly. Download the instructions from the door closer manufacturer's web site and see if it is installed correctly.
4. If the arm makes noise and bounces up and down while the door is in motion, tighten the fasteners that hold the arm to the closer, to the header, and at the knuckle that holds the two parts of the arm together.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO REPLACE YOUR DOOR CLOSER:

1. If oil is leaking from your door closer, throw it away and buy a new one.
2. If your door closer is slamming the door and cannot be adjusted to do otherwise, either the fluid has leaked out or the valve seals are worn out. Either way, your best option is to replace it.
3. If the door closer has no spring tension and the spring tension adjustment turns round and round with no effect, the spring is broken the door closer must be replaced.

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These adjustment instructions are offered on an all care no responsibility basis; DIY maintenance is commenced at the owner's risk