



Actuators -vs- Solenoids

Since the acquisition of RODtronics Corp. we have heard a lot of controversy about actuators versus solenoids. After careful study and physical experience we have come up with a few conclusions. We have seen a few circumstances that warrant 35 lb. solenoids (a very few). If your doors are all aligned properly, and you have updated your old bolt style latches and the weather-stripping hasn't been overdone. We have seen that a 15 lb. actuator is more than enough to properly open a door. Sorry to say that most folks want a simple and inexpensive solution to a poorly opening door, and the easy way out is to install a mechanism with a heavier pound pull.

The standard actuator used in the industry has between 12 and 15 lbs. of pull or push. They should be sufficient to open any properly adjusted and aligned door that has enough weather seal to do the job and has not been overdone. I have seen literally thousands of vehicles that the actuators open the doors perfectly every time. I have also seen vehicles when the doors are closed. They are either slammed shut or it takes a bump with the hip to latch the door shut, and the majority of the time these vehicles are using a higher poundage solenoid. Closely inspecting the vehicles of the latter scenario, you can see exactly why it would take 35 lbs. to jerk the door open, and a 200 lb. man's hip to jam the door shut.

The first thing we see is the weather-stripping and upholstery packed tight against the door so it is preloading the latch. (By preloading the latch, I mean pressure is applied to the jaws of the latch, which makes it much more difficult to open up, because it has to overcome the pressure or preload).

The second thing we see, when the doors are opened on the majority of cars, the door will drop anywhere from a quarter of an inch to a half of an inch. Because the hinge pins are worn out, to overcome this and keep the belt lines nice they use the latch to adjust the door, for proper beltline appearance.

The third thing that has been observed, the dovetail that was used to align the door with the bolt style latch was never removed after the upgrade to Bear Jaw latches. This scenario causes a bind between the latch and the dovetail if the adjustment is less than perfect. Alignment can be achieved by properly shimming the hinges. (And remembering that Hennery's belt lines seldom matched up on a new vehicle).

The last but not least observation to share is one that is overlooked the majority of the time. The Bear Jaw latch has two mechanisms that operate the latch. One being the actuator, the other being the inside door handle. The inside handle has a return spring built in. When the actuator is triggered it has to overcome the pressure from this spring before it can start to move the latch. This is easy to spot. When the actuator is triggered does the inside handle move like magic? That means it's connected.

Golden RODtronics is one of the few companies that carries a Bear Jaw Latch that has two independent ears to facilitate the opening process (inside and out).

We hope this clears up some of the haze.