



90% of Clothes Dryers are Fire Hazards

Nearly every home has a dryer. But do people take the time to do any maintenance on them? Not unless there is some reason to call a service professional because the dryer is not working or making a hideously loud noise.

Most people are not aware that dryers and vents are involved in over 16,000 residential fires each year. These fires caused an average of 10 deaths, 280 injuries and \$97 million in direct property damage per year. That is a huge number that is easily preventable. And it is relatively easy to take care of this.

WHAT CAUSES THE FIRES?

- ◆ Lint accumulates inside the dryer housing. Some of the working components inside a dryer can get very hot, and the cottons and synthetic materials used in clothing are very good fire starters.
- ◆ Vent hoses can start on fire when the lint inside the hose ignites. As hot, moist lint comes out of the dryer, it will tend to stick to a cooler surface. The longer the lint is allowed to accumulate inside the hosing, the thicker it will get. Over time the lint will build up so much that the dryer cannot get rid of the hot air easily. This will end up with longer drying times initially and then possibly a fire. If you have a plastic vent hose, if a fire starts inside the hose, it will burn very easily creating a very dangerous fire.
- ◆ Solid metal vent piping can also cause the same problem, but the results are not as catastrophic as with a plastic vent line as the metal will help contain the fire.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INDICATIONS THAT THE VENT LINES NEED CLEANING?

- ◆ If your dryer is overheating and shutting off, runs what appears to be too long or it smells hot, or if it has been over two years since you last had the dryer and vent line cleaned out (especially if it is very long or you have a large family), your dryer is a candidate for a good old-fashioned cleaning.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- ◆ It is recommended that every two years that the dryer and the dryer vent lines should be cleaned out, including the lint trap. Either you can hire an appliance repair specialist or you can do this yourself. There are special brushes you can purchase at home improvement centers to do this task yourself.
- ◆ If your dryer vent has a plastic hose, change it to a corrugated metal one to minimize your risks of a future fire.

Don't be surprised by how much lint you will get out of your dryer and vent lines. If a dryer can't get rid of its heat easily, something catastrophic may happen. It is best to take these on before they can cause you or your home harm.

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