

DRYER LINT CLEANING REMINDER

A clothes dryer doesn't look scary or dangerous. Unfortunately, it is the cause of over 20,000 house fires every year totaling millions of dollars in damage. Regular cleaning and maintenance can protect your family and your investment in your home.

Get Rid of Dangerous Lint in the Dryer

Whether you use an electric or gas clothes dryer, you will have lint. Lint builds up in the lint trap but also inside the dryer vent and duct work, reducing air flow and drying efficiency.

Lint can cause humidity levels to rise around vents causing mildew and mold to develop in walls and insulation. But most important: Lint is combustible. Lint causes fires.

Fortunately, removing dangerous lint is simple. The first area to clean is the dryer lint trap after every load by removing the lint from the screen and wiping the edges. If the screen seems clogged, it may be from the dryer sheets you have been using. Submerge the lint screen in a sink of hot water and scrub with a bristle brush to remove all the built-up fabric softener.

The key to success in de-linting a dryer is a dryer lint brush. This long-handled flexible brush will help you reach areas that you cannot get to by hand.

Remove the dryer lint filter. In the opening - whether on the top of the dryer or inside the door, use the brush to gently loosen the built-up lint. Don't force the brush if you meet resistance but be sure to clean every surface as much as possible.

Remove the big chunks of lint that come out with the brush. Don't worry about the smaller pieces.

Replace the cleaned lint filter. Turn the dryer setting to air only and run for a cycle. This will pull any remaining lint into the filter or blow the loose particles out the outside vent.

How to Clean Dryer Vents

At least once per year, unplug the dryer and check where the exhaust vent connects to the dryer.

The hose or pipe is held in place by a clip or a steel clamp that can be loosened by pliers or a screwdriver. After removing the pipe, reach inside the dryer opening or use a vent brush or shop vacuum to remove as much lint as possible. Use a damp cloth to wipe away remaining lint around the connection. Then look inside the hose or pipe and clean it as well.

If you still have a white or silver vinyl duct hose, it should be replaced immediately. It is flammable and if ignited by the dryer it will burn and cause a house fire. All national and local building codes now require metal ducting for clothes dryers. Ideally, you should use rigid aluminum tubing pieces between the dryer and the outside vent. This type of tubing does the best job of resisting the collection of lint in the duct and cannot be easily crushed. Flexible aluminum ducting is available, however, it is more prone to collecting lint inside.

One last step is to clean the exterior vent. Again remove as much lint as possible using your hand or a shop vacuum. You may need a screwdriver or another tool to hold the vent flap open for easier cleaning. If you live in a high humidity area or use your dryer more than twice weekly, you may need to clean this vent several times per year.

Use the Dryer Safely

- If possible, clothing that has been soiled by volatile chemicals like gasoline, cleaning agents or even large amounts of cooking oil should not be dried in a clothes dryer. If they must be dried in the machine, wash the clothing more than once to minimize the risk of fire. Use the lowest heat setting and shortest drying cycle possible. Use a cycle with a cool-down period at the end of the cycle to prevent ignition.
- Never leave a dryer running when no one is at home.
- Never store volatile chemicals or rags near a dryer. Some liquids emit vapors than ignite. The area around the dryer should be kept free of lint, papers, and stacks of clothing.
- If you suspect a fire, get everyone outside and call 911. Disconnect the power immediately or turn off the breakers if you can do so safely. Keep a fully-charged fire extinguisher in the laundry room.

You can always choose to use a Professional Service many of which can be located on the internet.