

A-1 Inspections

Joseph McCulley, Lic. # 70001176

Call 405-626-0132

www.A1InspectionsOK.com

A1InspectionsOK@gmail.com

Clothes Dryers and Lint Build-up

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1998, clothes dryers were associated with 15,600 fires, which resulted in 20 deaths and 370 injuries. Fires can occur when lint builds up in the dryer or in the exhaust duct. Lint can block the flow of air, cause excessive heat build-up, and result in a fire in some dryers.

To help prevent fires:

Clean the lint screen/filter before or after drying each load of clothes. If clothing is still damp at the end of a typical drying cycle or drying requires longer times than normal, this may be a sign that the lint screen or the exhaust duct is blocked.

Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct periodically. Check the outside dryer vent while the dryer is operating to make sure exhaust air is escaping. If it is not, the vent or the exhaust duct may be blocked. To remove a blockage in the exhaust path, it may be necessary to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer. Remember to reconnect the ducting to the dryer and outside vent before using the dryer again.

Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up. Have a qualified service person clean the interior of the dryer chassis periodically to minimize the amount of lint accumulation. Keep the area around the dryer clean and free of clutter.

Replace plastic or foil, accordion-type ducting material with rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct. Most manufacturers specify the use of a rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct, which provides maximum airflow. The flexible plastic or foil type duct can more easily trap lint and is more susceptible to kinks or crushing, which can greatly reduce the airflow.

Take special care when drying clothes that have been soiled with volatile chemicals such as gasoline, cooking oils, cleaning agents, or finishing oils and stains. If possible, wash the clothing more than once to minimize the amount of volatile chemicals on the clothes and, preferably, hang the clothes to dry. If using a dryer, use the lowest heat setting and a drying cycle that has a cool-down period at the end of the cycle. To prevent clothes from igniting after drying, do not leave the dried clothes in the dryer or piled in a laundry basket. Excessive lint build up occurs slowly and gradually. You don't realize it is happening. You think that by cleaning out the lint filter after each use you are doing your job and maintaining the dryer. **Not quite!**

A full load of wet clothes contains about a half gallon of water. Lint is created from the clothes as water is removed during the drying process. This lint will build up in crevices deep down inside the lint filter trap, and all along the dryer vent hose. At the end of the day, your **dryer is the number 1 source of fire in the home, and they most frequently originate from two places: dryer venting and the lint trap.**

What are the warning signs that dangerous lint build up is occurring in your dryer and venting system? Well, the symptoms may include:

- Clothes take longer and longer to dry;
- Clothes don't fully dry;
- Clothes are hotter than normal at the end of the drying cycle;
- The outside of dryer gets very hot;
- The outside exhaust vent flapper does not open very much indicating low exhaust velocity;
- Laundry room becomes more humid than it is usually;
- Burnt smell is evident in the laundry room