

Dryer Vent Cleaning Can Prevent Clothes Dryer Fires

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Fire Data Center estimate that household clothes dryers annually cause nearly 16,000 fires, 15 deaths, hundreds of injuries and carbon monoxide poisonings, and \$100,000,000 in damages. Home owners can prevent about 70% of dryer fires by watching for warning signs and conducting simple maintenance on their machines.

Remember: The single greatest cause of dryer fires is lint build up; lint makes excellent fuel for fire. Experts cite failure to clean as the number one cause of fires in clothing dryers.

Warning Signs:

- Your laundry takes longer than normal to dry or does not get thoroughly dry;
- Your dryer feels hot;
- Your laundry feels hotter than normal;
- You find less lint than normal on the filter, indicating it might remain inside the dryer;
- You find excess lint in back of the dryer
- Your clothing feels damp or smells musty after drying;
- Your dryer shuts off early;
- The outdoors flap on the exhaust vent seems partially closed or not moving;
- You find lint accumulating on the exhaust vent or elsewhere;
- If you have a gas heater and you smell the gas.

Preventing a Fire:

- Clean the lint filter after ***EVERY*** load;
- Do not run your dryer while you are asleep or away from your home;
- Do not run your dryer without a lint filter;
- Avoid drying materials such as rubber, plastic, or foam;
- Keep the lint filter and the ducts clean and clear of lint and any other obstructions;
- Do not dry rags or towels used to clean up chemicals, gasoline, or oil;
- Keep the area around the dryer free of boxes, newspapers, or anything else flammable;
- Conduct periodic inspections and cleaning of the duct hose and vent, ensuring they remain free of all obstructions and that airflow is not restricted;
- Have your dryer professionally installed, using a duct vent with as few bends as possible;
- If you have a gas heater, have it checked regularly for leaks and ensure no sources of flame are nearby.

About the author: Wayne Herr is the founder of VentSmart Dryer Vent Cleaning of Tampa Bay Florida for more information about dryer vent cleaning see www.safedryervent.com