

Clothes Dryer Maintenance Tips for Energy Efficiency

Being Dry is No Laughing Matter

- If you have a gas dryer, frequently check the exhaust vent to ensure it operates properly to prevent the buildup of dangerous (and potentially fatal) carbon monoxide (CO) fumes in your home. To be safe, install a CO detector in your laundry area. CAUTION!
- Flexible plastic and metal foil vent hoses can collapse and allow lint to accumulate, posing a serious fire risk. That's why dryer manufacturers recommend using rigid metal or flexible metal vents.
- Use the dryer less, without sacrificing function: no matter if it's a gas or electric unit, you can control your dryer's energy consumption. Think about what you include in each load. For example, the lightweight clothes will dry more quickly than the heavier ones, and the extra time the dry ones spend riding along with the heavier, still-wet ones may damage them—or at least cause excess wear and tear.
- Adjust the settings for each load.
- Dry full loads: running a full cycle for a half load wastes energy.
- Don't overload the dryer. The dryer needs space for air circulation to efficiently evaporate the water caught in the fabrics.
- Fluff bulky items as you load them.
- Towels, sheets, jeans, and other heavy clothing will dry faster if you separate and shake them before tossing them in the dryer.
- Never over-dry your clothes. Over-drying can weaken fabrics and wastes energy. If your machine is equipped with a moisture sensor, use it.
- Use the cool-down cycle.
- This setting takes advantage of the residual heat left in the dryer at the end of the cycle and can substantially cut down on clothes wrinkling.
- Clean the lint screen before every load.
- Your clothes won't dry if the heated air in the machine can't circulate and vent properly.
- Check the outside exhaust vent monthly.
- If the vent is stuck shut, moist air can't escape, and your dryer will run longer than usual to dry clothes. If the vent is stuck open, cold air can enter your home during the winter months.
- Regularly clean the moisture sensor near the drum.
- Buildup from chemicals in fabrics and fabric softeners can limit the sensor's effectiveness, so gently clean it with a bit of rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab or rag.
- Thoroughly clean the dryer's vent system
- Every couple of months, remove the dryer's lint filter and use a skinny brush with a long handle to remove lint from inside the dryer's vent system. Brushes made for this purpose are available at hardware and discount stores for less than \$10. Also, clean the vent on the outside of your home, and make sure it opens and closes properly. Finally, clean the entire vent duct once a year or as needed—or call a professional to handle the job.

Being a responsible consumer in our day and age means getting yourself informed and making the right environmental choices for your benefit and everybody else's. A well-cared-for appliance will serve you longer and better and reduce the amount of trash we put in the landfills and pollution in the air.

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