

What's the Risk?

Residential Clothes Dryer Fires



THE ISSUE

Residential clothes dryers pose a fire hazard in North America. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) there are approximately 13,000 clothes dryer fires in residential buildings annually in the United States. These preventable fires cause deaths, injuries and over \$300 million U.S. in property damage each year. (Canadian statistics are not available for this class of fire.)



WHAT'S THE RISK?

The NFPA indicates that the main cause of a dryer fire is when lint traps are not cleaned regularly or when venting/hoses are blocked due to lint build-up. A blocked lint trap or vent pipe prevents the dryer from venting outside, turning the highly combustible lint into a fire hazard.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The following precautions are advised:

- Clean lint traps following each use of the clothes dryer.
- Clean exhaust piping at least once per year.
- Follow the manufacturers instructions for cleaning the inside of the dryer cabinet.
- Replace accordion style plastic or aluminum exhaust ducts with rigid metal duct pipe. Accordion style exhaust ducts are difficult to clean and can sag enabling lint to build up in the duct.
- Never use a clothes dryer without a lint filter, or with a lint filter that is loose, damaged, or clogged.
- Keep the area around the dryer clear of combustible items.
- Have your clothes dryer serviced and cleaned annually by a qualified individual.
- Do not dry anything that has ever had anything flammable on it, even after washing.
- Ensure there are working smoke alarms on every storey of the home and outside all sleeping areas.

