

Dryer Safety

Clothes dryers are an everyday household item that can pose a serious risk of fire if they are not properly maintained. A clothes dryer operates by blowing hot air through a revolving drum. As clothes are dried, lint is produced as water is removed. Lint accumulation, in the dryer and in the dryer vent, can reduce airflow, and create a highly flammable fuel source.

Stay Safe

To increase safety when using a clothes dryer, we recommend the following tips:

- Remove lint from traps, vents, and surrounding areas
- Ensure proper venting of the dryer to the outside
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance and cleaning
- Never put synthetic materials such as rubber, plastic, foam, or pieces of cloth that have been used to sponge up flammable liquids in the dryer, even if previously washed
- Clean the lint out of the exhaust pipe and the rear of the dryer regularly
- Inspect your lint filter for rips each time you use it. If you see any rips, replace immediately
- The exhaust pipe should be as short as possible and have limited bends to allow for adequate airflow



Dryer Fires Do Damage

In a report released by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the statistics regarding residential building clothes dryer fires. Between the years 2002-2004, an annual average of 12,700 clothes dryer fires occurred in residential buildings. These fires were responsible for an estimated 15 civilian fire deaths, 300 civilian fire injuries, and \$88 million in property loss each year.

How Dryer Fires Occur

In residential buildings, operational deficiency, including "failure to clean", was the leading factor contributing to clothes dryer fires, followed by mechanical malfunction and electrical failure. Approximately 62% of clothes dryer fires were confined to the object of fire origin while about 27% were confined to the room of origin.

The report, Clothes Dryer Fires in Residential Buildings, was developed by the USFA's National Fire Data Center as part of its Topical Fire Research Series and is based on data from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for 2002-2004. The report examines the characteristics of clothes dryer fires and provides recommendations for clothes dryer fire safety.