



Lowdown on Lint

TAKE A MOMENT TO CLEAN YOUR DRYER FILTER.

Highly combustible lint in clothes dryers can block airflow, promote excessive heat buildup and result in a fire. Dryers cause 15,500 fires a year. To prevent problems, Randy Poole, assistant vice president of catastrophes for Liberty Mutual, offers these guidelines:

- **Keep it clean.** Clean your lint filter or screen with every load of clothes. If clothing is taking longer to dry, there may be a blockage in the exhaust duct or lint screen. Keep the area behind and around the dryer clean and free of clutter that could fuel a fire.
- **Check for exhaust system airflow.** While the dryer's on, check the outside vent. If air is not flowing, stop the dryer and investigate. Carbon monoxide can be forced back into your home if a gas clothes dryer is blocked by lint or debris.
- **Have your dryer vent system professionally cleaned once a year.** Have the duct and interior of the dryer chassis cleaned periodically by a qualified service professional.
- **Use rigid or corrugated semirigid metal duct.** It's specified by most manufacturers to provide maximum airflow. Flexible plastic or foil-type duct is more susceptible to kinking or crushing, causing reduced airflow and trapping lint. The duct to the outside should be short and straight. Home-building trends are bringing laundry rooms upstairs and away from exterior walls, so beware of overly creative ducting.
- **Never run the dryer when you go to bed or leave home.**

Water Heater HELP

REGULAR MAINTENANCE CAN HELP PREVENT RUST AND LEAKS.

Water heater failure ranks as one of the top five sources of water damage in the home, according to the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS). After 12 years, nearly 75 percent of water heaters have failed. Proper maintenance can help prevent damage and extend a water heater's life, says Katie Carter, engineering project manager for IBHS. She offers these tips:

- **Have a plumber inspect the anode rod every two years.** Located in your tank, this thin aluminum or magnesium rod normally corrodes before the heater's walls. Replacing it when needed can prevent leaks and bursts.
- **Flush out the tank twice a year.** Attach a garden hose to the valve at the bottom of the tank and flush the water to the outside through a door or window. This helps remove built-up minerals.

Should your water heater burst, first ensure your personal safety, advises Sue White, Liberty Mutual vice president, claims product manager. Then:

1. **Protect your property** from further damage.
2. **Call Liberty Mutual.** A representative will help secure your home and recommend repair specialists.
3. **Keep all parts of the water heater** until the claims appraiser has had a chance to examine them.

TOP 5 SOURCES OF WATER DAMAGE

Simple home maintenance can save costly repairs.

1. **Toilet.** Don't overstuff it with tissue, and know where the shutoff valve is located.
2. **Washing machine hose.** Make sure it's properly connected. Replace a corroded hose with a steel-reinforced or other high-quality one. Also, it's a good idea to turn off the valve when you're not using the washer.
3. **Water heater.** Maintain it properly, following the guidelines, *above*.
4. **Ice maker.** Check the supply line for leaks or blockages every six months.
5. **Tub and shower.** Maintain caulking to prevent leaks.

For more safety tips and information, call your Liberty Rep!

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