



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

410-313-6000

Home Clothes Dryer Safety

Facts

- 2,900 home clothes dryer fires are reported each year and cause an estimated 5 deaths, 100 injuries, and \$35 million in property loss.
- The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them (34 percent).
- More home clothes dryer fires occur in the fall and winter months, peaking in January.

Clothes Dryer Do's

Installation

- Follow the manufacturers' instructions. Read and adhere to all warnings prior to use.
- Plug electric dryers into the correct dedicated outlet. No extension cord may be used.
- Obtain a permit to install a gas dryer, a certified technician is required. Contact the Department of Inspections, Licenses and permits @ 410-313-2455 for information.
- Use rigid, non-ribbed metal duct for venting.

Cleaning

- Clean the lint filter before and after each load of laundry.
- Don't forget to clean the back of the dryer and your dryer vent where lint can build up.
- Clothes taking longer than normal to dry may be a sign your dryer needs cleaning.



Maintenance

- Inspect the venting system behind the dryer to ensure it is not damaged or restricted.
- Make sure the outdoor vent covering opens when the dryer is on.
- Replace coiled-wire foil or plastic venting with rigid, non-ribbed metal duct.
- Keep the area around the clothes dryer free of items that can burn. Dispose of the lint properly. Do not leave lint stored in the laundry room or around flammable liquids.

Clothes Dryer Don'ts

- Don't use a clothes dryer without a lint filter or with a damaged or clogged lint filter.
- Don't overload the dryer.
- Don't use a wire screen or cloth to cover the wall damper. They can collect lint and clog the dryer vent.
- Don't dry anything containing foam, rubber or plastic, like a rug with a rubber backing.
- Don't dry any item for which the manufacturers' instructions state "dry away from heat."
- Don't dry items that have come into contact with anything flammable like alcohol, cleaning solvents, paint, pesticides, cooking oils or gasoline. Dry them outdoors or in a well-ventilated room, away from heat.
- Don't leave a clothes dryer running if you leave home or when you go to bed.
- Don't leave dried clothes in the dryer or in a large pile. Heat may build up inside the dryer or pile faster than heat is lost causing spontaneous combustion and a fire.

For more information concerning home clothes dryer safety contact
the Office of the Fire Marshal at 410-313-6040