

Preventing Dryer Fires



Proper Maintenance for a low risk dryer



1. Clean the Lint Trap

Pull out the lint screen and push a snorkel brush straight down into the trap. Twirl the brush to remove any globs of lint at the bottom of the trap. Shine a flashlight down the trap to make sure it's clean.

2. Clean the Ductwork

Disconnect the ductwork from the dryer exhaust and from the exterior vent. If the duct is plastic or ribbed metal, replace with new. If the duct is smooth-wall metal take it outside and clean all the parts with a round dryer-vent brush.

3. Clean the Outside Vent

Working from inside, spin the vent brush a few inches into the duct leading outside, then pull it back and clean off the bristles. Repeat until the bristles reach as far as the exhaust hood on the outside wall. (Don't try to shove the lint out with the brush; you may create a clog.) Then go outside and make sure the vent hood isn't plugged. If need be, remove the hood, clean it out, and then put it back.

4. Reattach the Duct

Reassemble the metal ductwork and seal the joints with aluminum tape. (Don't connect the sections with screws, which snag lint.) The ends of the ductwork should fit snugly onto the dryer's exhaust and vent hood; no tape or hose clamps needed.

Flexible vinyl ducting is flammable, traps lint, restricts airflow, and no longer meets building codes. Ducts made out of shiny aluminized Mylar are more fire-resistant but just as likely to catch lint. And flexible ribbed aluminum ducts, while fireproof, are also notorious lint traps. Four-inch round steel ducts are the best way to go. The ducts' smooth walls won't collect lint as quickly, they're easier to clean, and they can't burn.



lint build-up



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