



Dryer Fires & Home Fire Safety/Prevention

Home fires are a genuine threat to the property and lives of people across the United States. In the past year, there were over one million fires in the U.S. in 2011. Of these fires, nearly three thousand resulted in an average of \$35 million in destroyed property and roughly one hundred injuries on an annual basis. Many of these fires are preventable. Failure to clean one's dryer is one of the leading causes of these types of fires. They are caused by lint buildup, mechanical and electrical malfunction or failure, or failure to use proper clothes. Putting lint in the wrong materials. For this reason, it is important that families incorporate dryer safety into their routines and adults must understand the threat that dryers can pose and what their part is in avoiding the

To reduce the risk of clothes dryer fires, proper maintenance is required. Dryer fires are common and highly flammable and can become trapped not only in the machine's lint trap, but also around the machine. Lint that comes from clothing and other articles made of materials such as cotton and linen. When lint builds up, it can ignite the lint and start a fire. For this reason, kids and anyone who uses the dryer must be instructed to clean the lint trap between each load. Lint and dust may also accumulate on the floor around the machine. Obstruction of the vent is another way that dryer fires start. If the vents are not cleaned of lint, they can cause the dryer to overheat and safety sensors within the unit to fail. This may cause the lint to spread to cause a fire. To prevent lint buildup in vents, they should be cleaned at least twice a year. Dryer users should be advised of the warning signs, such as clothing taking longer to dry and the dryer making unusual noises. Inform an adult of any of these signs so that the proper preventative steps can be taken.

For the safety of themselves and their family, people must be able to recognize when a fire is out of control. In the first few seconds, turn into one that is too big to contain quickly. When this happens, the main priority is to get out and foremost it is critical that everyone stay as calm as possible under the circumstances. The best way to escape is to crawl and the smoke will rise, down near the floor is the easiest place to breathe as the air will be less dense. Do not use the elevator and touch the door first. If the door or knob feels hot to the touch, do not open it. Instead, exit through a window. If you have a fire escape, use it. Hanging out a noticeable towel or sheet that is light in color and easy to detect.

A safety checklist is vital to keeping families safe in the event of a fire. The checklist is meant to help families prepare for the event that one does occur. The checklist will also ensure that everyone within the home understands what role they play in keeping the family and themselves safe. For adults, the checklist includes testing smoke alarms, ensuring that each room has been checked for fire hazards, and that a fire escape plan should be one that allows for two ways to exit every room in the home. Adults must test the fire escape plan with the entire family at least twice a year. The fire safety checklist for children involves recognizing the signs of a fire, understanding the escape plan, and understanding that a fire is a very real danger, taking the right steps can help reduce the chances of one occurring.

For more information about home fire safety, please view the following links:

- [Dryer Fires and How to Prevent Them](#)
- [Seattle Times: Tips to Prevent Fires that Start with Clothes Dryers](#)