

## *Home*

### **P R E V E N T   D R Y E R   F I R E S**

Each year, lint-choked clothes dryers start more than 16,000 fires nationwide at a cost of nearly \$100 million in property damage. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, that statistic makes dryers the most likely appliance in your home to start a fire – topping even toasters and ovens.

Your dryer's lint trap collects only 75% of the combustible fluffy stuff. The rest builds up inside the exhaust pipe and vent, collects on the backside of the drum and around the motor, and clings to wires. If you don't clean those trouble spots regularly, lint can impede air flow, making the dryer motor work harder and heat up – perhaps igniting the lint.

To reduce your chances of a dryer fire, fire-safety experts recommend you:

- NEVER leave home with the dryer running.
- Clean the lint screen after every use.
- Periodically remove lint build-up in the system.
- Don't crush the exhaust pipe behind the dryer. (Crushing can happen over time, especially if you tend to lean on the dryer while folding clothes.)
- Replace plastic exhaust pipe with aluminum. Sheet metal vent pipes are even better.
- Check outside vents for blockages from rodent or bird nests.
- Consider laundry room placement when buying your next home. Opt for layouts with the dryers positioned on an outside wall to minimize venting distance. (Unfortunately, many new-home designs locate them in hall closets with lint-trapping bends in the dryer hoses). Improper venting also can create moisture problems, leading to rot and mold.

**Safety alert!** If your clothes feel especially hot when you take them out of the dryer or they're still damp when the cycle is over, you could have a potentially serious problem. Check your dryer thoroughly before using it again.

