

Prevent dryer fires

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Clothes dryers are one of the leading causes of fires in homes, hotels and motels and hospitals. Here are some ways to prevent that tragedy:

- Clean the filter screen after each load. This will keep the vent clear. When accumulated lint clogs the vent, the dryer can overheat and a fire could result.

- Stay home while the dryer is in use. Turn off the dryer before leaving the house.

- Clean vents to outside. Twice a year you should clean the plastic hosepipe that vents to the outside. Use the vacuum cleaner to suck out accumulated dust and lint.

- Vacuum the motor area. The dust and lint in the vent pipe can ignite if it gets hot enough. Vacuum the motor area if you can get to it. You may have to remove a panel to get at it.

- Clean commercial dryer vents regularly. Commercial dryers get a lot of use and will have a common venting system. It is extremely important to have the vent systems cleaned regularly.

- Don't dry mop heads. The dryer's heat can ignite the cleaning chemical residue on mop heads.

For more information on fire safety visit www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/pubed/firesafetytopics/index.htm.

Courtesy of the Office of the State Fire Marshal in Stow

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