



# JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

## OVERHEATED CLOTHES DRYERS CAN CAUSE FIRES

**The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 15,500 fires associated with clothes dryers occur annually. What causes some clothes dryer fires?** Lack of maintenance is a contributing factor. Lint can block the flow of air, cause excessive heat build-up, and result in a fire in some dryers. To help prevent fires:

**Clean the lint screen/ filter** before or after drying each load of clothes. If clothing is still damp at the end of a typical drying cycle or drying requires longer times than normal, this may be a sign that the lint screen or the exhaust duct is blocked.



**Clean the dryer vent** and exhaust duct periodically. Check the outside dryer vent while the dryer is operating to make sure exhaust air is escaping. If it is not, the vent or the exhaust duct may be blocked. To remove a blockage in the exhaust path, it may be necessary to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer. Remember to reconnect the ducting to the dryer and outside vent before using the dryer again.

**Clean behind the dryer**, where lint can build up. Have a qualified service person clean the interior of the dryer chassis periodically to minimize the amount of lint accumulation. Keep the area around the dryer clean and free of clutter.

**Replace plastic or foil, accordion-type ducting** material with rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct. Most manufacturers specify the use of a rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct, which provides maximum airflow. The flexible plastic or foil type duct can more easily trap lint and is more susceptible

to kinks or crushing, which can greatly reduce the airflow.

**Take special care** when drying clothes that have been soiled with volatile chemicals such as gasoline, cooking oils, cleaning agents, or finishing oils and stains. If possible, wash the clothing more than once to minimize the amount of volatile chemicals on the clothes and, preferably, hang the clothes to dry. If using a dryer, use the lowest heat setting and a drying cycle that has a cool-down period at the end of the cycle. To prevent clothes from igniting after drying, do not leave the dried clothes in the dryer or piled in a laundry basket.

*Source: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*



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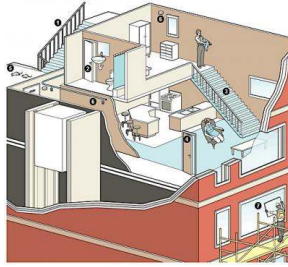
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## IS BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE PART OF A HOME INSPECTION?

This is a questions which, to date, has never been adequately answered. It is an uncomfortable issue for most home inspectors and, in fact, is an area where inspectors tend to walk on eggs.

Industry standards specifically list building code compliance as not within the scope of a home inspection. This is because the building code, plumbing code, electrical code, mechanical code, fire code and other related codes are encyclopedic in size and scope. No person could possibly master the entirety of these volumes, and expectations of that magnitude would subject home inspectors to unacceptable levels of liability. On the other hand, many of the faulty conditions routinely reported by home inspectors are specifically based upon standards set forth in the code. If a home inspector says the risers in a staircase are 9" high and should not exceed 7" or 8" (depending upon the situation), where do these numbers originate? You guessed it: the building code. If a home inspector says the fire door in the garage must be self-closing, what is the source of that standard? Right again: the building code.



Regarding code compliance inspections, the problem here is that no one can accurately define the boundaries whereby the building code is applied to the home inspection process. Thus, home inspections should not be regarded as all-encompassing code compliance evaluations, even though the building code is applied in some cases (without the word "code" being specifically mentioned in the text of a home inspection report).

If that's not sufficiently clear to the reader, don't feel left out: It's not yet clear to many in the home inspection profession either.

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### HOME INSPECTION NIGHTMARES!



You were probably wondering where all the old, really cool, plaid lunch boxes went. Here is one in a basement ceiling being used as a 120V electrical junction box. The temptation to peek inside subsided when I read the labels listing the "STEPS to DISARM."

*courtesy of the ASHI Reporter*



## ASK THE INSPECTOR

**Is Asbestos it still a concern?**

*Erick's Response:*

Yes, but it is continually decreasing due to ongoing mitigation. Asbestos containing material (ACM) can still be found in homes, mostly in attics and walls. Building materials and appliances (such as ovens, dishwashers, floor and ceiling tiles, and furnaces) made between approx. 1910 and 1970 often contain asbestos. The presence and type of ACM can only be determined by analysis under a microscope. A professional tester or mitigator can assess the situation. If asbestos is discovered, the main concern is its condition. If the fibers can become airborne, it should be removed or encapsulated. Removal is generally preferred at a cost not much higher than encapsulation.

