

The Potential Hazard Overlooked in Most Homes

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that most clothes dryer fires are related to your dryer vent. According to their reports annually there are approximately 16,000 clothes dryer fires, 20 deaths, 370 injuries, and \$67.7 millions in property damage. Excessive lint build up can cause the dryer to overheat and the lint near the filament ignites then, the fires worsens if comes in contact with any combustibles.

Several types of materials are available for the use to vent dryers...

- Rigid metal (aluminum or galvanized) – preferred
- Flexible metal – acceptable
- Flexible thin foil – unacceptable
- Flexible plastic – unacceptable



Despite being sold in all local hardware stores nationwide many home still use vinyl or foil ducting primarily because it is cheap, appears to be easy to install and because they assume that what it's for it must work not knowing the what risk is possibly being taken. There are two problems with these types' ducts they can fail due to heat and collapse and lint sticks to the inner surface. The Underwriter Laboratories Inc. sets the national safety standard and requires that manufacturers only recommend using rigid metal or flexible metal ducts.

Two other common problems are bird nests and moisture build up. Bird nests inside a dryer vent can completely block the opening from allowing any air to exhaust from the duct resulting in overheating mentioned above. Moisture causes problems because a dryer is supposed to dispose of approximately 1 gallon of water per load. Most 12lb. loads weigh 20lbs. once being removed from the washer. That moisture could create odor problems or mildew. Again properly exhausting to the outside is recommended.

Horizontal ducts or ducts with multiple turns are more likely to have moisture related issues that vertical dryer vents. Many different water leakage problems from dryer vents can be initially misdiagnosed because of water stains, damage to ceilings to caulking erosion, damage nearby window frames and damage around external vent covers.