

Fire officials remind people about dos and don'ts of dryers

The Oakville Fire Department is reminding residents to regularly maintain their household appliances to avoid a house fire.

It comes in the wake of a recent dryer fire at an Oakville home that resulted in an estimated \$40,000 worth of damage.

According to the Ontario Fire Marshals' office, faulty or improperly maintained household appliances like dryers, washing machines, dishwashers and slow cookers are the cause of at least one fire per day in Ontario.

"The Oakville Fire Department responds to many household appliance fires because regular maintenance is not being carried out. Almost all of these fires were preventable," said Oakville

Fire Chief Lee Grant.

"Not only do we recommend turning off or unplugging appliances when not in use, but we stress that someone should always be home when running them. I'd prefer to come home to wet laundry than a home fire any day."

As it is improperly-maintained dryers that cause the most fires, fire officials recommend reducing the risk by:

- Determining the straightest and most direct venting path to the outdoors to reduce the likelihood of lint accumulation in bends or elbows
- Using rigid or flexible metal ducting for venting to the outdoors over other duct products. Plastic or metal foil ducts are more prone

to kinking, sagging and crushing, which leads to lint buildup. Plastic ducting is also more prone to ignition and melting

- Remembering clothes dryers designed for closet-type spaces or enclosed rooms (e.g. in apartments) should have sufficient incoming air for proper operation

- Regularly removing the lint that accumulates in the lint screen, metal ducts and exhaust vent and hood. Clean inside the dryer cabinet according to manufacturer instructions

Residents should inspect and clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry, regularly inspect the air exhaust to ensure it is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap opens when

the dryer is operating.

Turn the dryer off when leaving the home or going to bed and ensure working smoke alarms are on every storey of a home — and outside all sleeping areas.

Fire officials also warn people against allowing clothes dryers to vent indoors; putting materials saturated by chemicals, oils or gasoline in the dryer, which can ignite during the drying cycle even after being washed; putting dry natural or synthetic rubber, rubber-coated sneakers, foam pillows or any garment with foam padding in the dryer; putting dry garments previously cleaned with dry-cleaning fluid in the dryer.

For more information, visit www.oakville.ca.

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