

# San Rafael

Mayor  
Albert J. Boro

Council Members  
Greg Brockbank  
Damon Connolly  
Barbara Heller  
Marc Levine

Christopher Gray  
Fire Chief

## Fire Safety

### Dryer Fire Safety Tips

**February 1, 2011, San Rafael, CA** – Did you know residential clothing dryers continue to be a fire problem in the USA? Owners are reminded that dryers are heat producing appliances that require ongoing maintenance to operate safely. To help owners we have created a list of dryer safety tips, as follows:

1. Make sure the dryer duct is made of solid metal material. Both vinyl and foil are combustible and spiral-wound surfaces tend to catch lint more readily.



2. The dryer duct should vent to the exterior and in no case should it vent to the attic or crawlspace.

Avoid the use of inside heat recovery diverter valves or termination boxes, which do not comply with current standards.

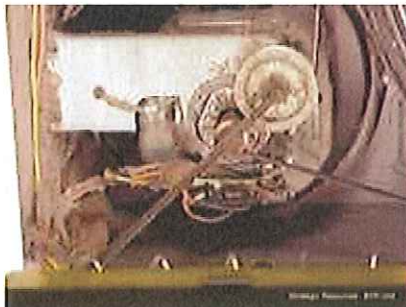
3. Avoid kinking or crushing the dryer duct to make up for installation in tight quarters - this further restricts airflow. If you really want to save extra space, use a product like the Dryerbox, which is designed to allow the dryer to be installed against the wall safely.



4. Minimize the length of the exhaust duct (maximum recommended lengths depend on a number of factors, such as number of bends, and vary by model - check with your manufacturer for their specifications). If this

is not possible, you can install a dryer duct booster.

5. If at all possible, use 4-inch diameter vent pipe and exterior exhaust hoods that have openings of sixteen square inches or more, which offer the least resistance to air flow.
6. Don't use screws to put your vent pipe together - the screw shafts inside the piping collect lint and cause additional friction.
7. Keep the dryer duct in good condition. Disconnect, clean and inspect the dryer duct run on a regular basis. This will reduce the fire hazard, increase the dryer's efficiency and increase its lifespan.
8. Check the outside vent cover to make sure it's not blocked or damaged.
9. Keep your dryer as lint-free as possible. By keeping your dryer clean, not only will you significantly reduce the fire hazard, you will also save money as your dryer will run more efficiently and last longer. To keep your dryer clean:



- A. Use a lint brush or vacuum attachment to remove accumulated lint from under the lint trap and other accessible places on a periodic basis.
  - B. Every 1-3 years, depending upon usage, have the dryer taken apart and thoroughly cleaned out by a qualified service technician.
  - C. Clean the lint trap after each load.
10. Alternative Solutions.
- A. Use a condensing dryer. Unlike conventional clothes dryers, condensing dryers do not require external clothes dryer venting. This significantly reduces the risk of a dryer fire.
  - B. Use a spin dryer, which uses an extremely fast spin speed to extract water from the clothes. They extract significantly more water from the clothes than a washing machine spin cycle does. Spin dryers can be used alone or in conjunction with a conventional clothes dryer. Thoroughly read manufacturers' instructions regarding the safe use of their dryer.

11. Don't keep combustibles like chemical cleaning products or chemical laden rags near your clothes dryer.
12. Before You Go. Never let your clothes dryer run while you are out of the house or even worse, when you are asleep.

Please contact the Office of the Fire Chief at Station 1 (1039 C St.) or for further information at (415) 485-3304.

