

Could a Fire Start in Your Dryer?

Washing machines and dryers are common equipment in facilities such as day care centers, health clubs, and gyms. Yet a dryer can be extremely hazardous if it isn't properly maintained. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), fires can occur when lint builds up in the dryer or in the exhaust duct.

Refer to the manufacturer's guidelines for proper operation of your dryer. Include recommended maintenance procedures in your daily schedule, and make a staff member responsible for ensuring procedures are followed.

To help prevent dryer fires, the CPSC provides these tips:

- Clean the lint screen before or after drying each load of clothes.
- Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct periodically. If the exhaust path is clogged, you may need to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer. Remember to reconnect the ducting before using the dryer again.
- Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up. 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.
- Take special care when drying clothes that have been soiled with volatile chemicals like cooking oils or cleaning agents. Wash the clothes more than once, and hang the clothes to dry.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.