

Laundry fires

STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME



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Fires can start in the laundry when you're not home or asleep. Make sure you do your washing and drying when you're awake at home so you can react quickly if a fire starts.

Preventing laundry fires

Anywhere you have electrical appliances in your home can become a fire risk, including the laundry. The combination of heat, things that can catch fire, water and electricity creates an environment where fires can start.

Be around when you do your laundry

It might sound extreme, but being around when you have a load of washing in the washing machine or dryer could be the difference between losing your home, or not.

You don't need to sit and watch it, but be home so you can act if something happens. Being awake if a fire starts could save your life. This is why we suggest you never go out, and never go to bed while your washing machine or dryer is operating.

Clean your lint filter regularly

Lint is made up of small fibers that have come off your washing in the dryer. Your clothes dryer operates at high temperatures and lint can catch fire very easily.

To prevent a fire starting in your laundry because of lint:

- clean the lint filter on your clothes dryer after each load/use
- don't use a clothes dryer without a lint filter or if the lint filter is loose or damaged
- clean the back of the dryer regularly to prevent a build-up of lint.



Using washers and dryers safely

- Install washing machine and clothes dryer according to the manufacturer's instructions and follow the manufacturer's guidelines when using them.
- Keep electrical appliances and cords away from water.
- Don't put too many clothes in the clothes dryer.
- Don't use your dryer or washing machine if they are damaged.
- Let the dryer complete its cool down cycle before stopping it and getting your clothes out.
- Make sure there is enough space around the clothes dryer to allow for air flow to prevent overheating.

Spontaneous combustion

Some laundry fires have started inside a clothes dryer, or even in a clothes basket after having been removed from the dryer. This has been the result of oily chemicals in stained fabric heating up and spontaneously combusting.

After washing, do not put into a clothes dryer any fabrics that have had flammable substances on them, like cooking oil, petrol, paint or alcohol. Because of their chemical nature, even after removing from the dryer, these chemicals can continue to heat up in a warm bundle of clothes until they reach their ignition temperature and spontaneously ignite.

Don't store chemicals in the laundry

Chemicals like oils, methylated spirits, paints and gas cylinders should not be stored in the laundry.

Store chemical products in an outside shed or chemical locker, away from ignition sources and out of reach of children. If you no longer need the chemicals you should dispose of them safely. Search 'detox your home'.



For more information on home fire safety visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/homefire