

# Easy appliance maintenance is time well-spent

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Here are some tips on how you can help extend the life of basic household appliances.

## Stoves and ovens

- Spend a little time cleaning your stove and oven. This includes the drip pans under the burners, and the oven. An excessive amount of cooking grease and/or food collected in the drip pans can be a fire hazard.
- Always clean your stove and oven with nonabrasive cleaners and not mild-abrasive cleaners.
- Remove any aluminum foil from your drip pans. The foil can cause the burners on electric stoves to short out and can cover oven vents located at one of the burners.

## Washing machines

- Inspect the fill hoses behind your washing machine. If the hoses are cracked or blistered (small bulges in the hose), the hoses should be replaced.
- Inspect the hose connections. Badly corroded connections will be difficult to remove if the hose fails. After turning the water off, unscrew the hose connections and clean them with soap and water.
- Look at the rubber washer in the hose connection. If the washers are cracked or distorted, replace them.
- Listen for dripping water when the washer is turned off. If you hear dripping water, it may mean that the water inlet valve is defective. Get it repaired.

## Dryers

- Inspect the dryer vent pipe for kinks or excessive length. Many dryer vents use flexible pipe. Kinks or sharp bends in flexible pipes can cause a backup of dryer lint and moisture. Backups will not allow moisture to discharge properly, resulting in extended drying times and heat buildup that can cause fires.
- If your dryer vent is more than 3 or 4 feet long, consider installing a solid metal vent pipe. These pipes are available at most hardware and home improvement stores.

## Dishwashers

- If the plastic coating has fallen off your dishwasher racks and the metal in the racks has rusted, the racks should be replaced. The rust from the racks can get caught in the pump and result in serious and expensive problems. You may have to call the manufacturer to get the correct racks.
- Clean out the holes in the dishwasher spray arms. Small pieces of food, paper or even glass can clog these holes. If the holes are clogged, the water is not spraying in the correct direction and will not clean your dishes properly.
- Clean out the dishwasher filter. Most filters are located in the bottom of the dishwasher, under the spray arm. You should read your owner's manual for help in accessing the filter.

- If you notice that your dishes are not getting as clean as they used to, it may mean that too little water is getting into the washer. A defective water inlet valve can cause this problem. A qualified appliance repair person is recommended for this problem.

Always check the references and insurance of all repair people you hire.

*Send home repair questions to Ask the Inspector at [H&G@ajc.com](mailto:H&G@ajc.com).*