

## Clothes dryer warning

One of ACTPLA's roles is to inspect possible cause of fires when the fire might be caused by an electrical fault.

Some fires have been found to be caused by the misuse of clothes dryers.

A common cause is lint filters left uncleaned. Filters can become blocked over time and retard ventilation. Heat can then build up in the dryer, lint can contact the drying element, causing the lint to ignite, which in turn ignites the clothes.

To avoid a fire always clean your lint filter on a regular basis.

Fires have also been caused by people turning off their dryer before the cooling cycle has been completed, and clothes have ignited inside the dryer.

Always ensure the full cycle is completed before you turn off your dryer.

Fumes released from industrial clothing that have been contaminated by petrol, oils or solvents and placed inside operating dryers can also cause clothes dryer fires. In these cases it was found that the clothes were initially cold washed and as a result traces of flammable liquid or oil were not removed.

Remember, elevated dryer temperatures can overheat contaminated clothing causing it to ignite. Avoid using clothes dryer to dry cold-washed protective clothing.

### Guidelines to ensure the safe use of clothes dryers

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and clean the lint filter after every use.
- Move the dryer and vacuum lint that has collected behind and underneath and make sure there is adequate room for ventilation around the dryer.
- Never use the dryer for drying clothes or rags that have been used to absorb flammable liquids.
- Never use the dryer to dry clothes that have not been washed. Unwashed clothes have a greater build up of oils and grease. Lint from these clothes will be more combustible and can ignite when hot.
- Clothes worn while using oils or sprays need to be washed in hot water to remove such substances before being placed in a dryer.
- Washing powders designed for cold-water washing may not remove oils out of clothes as well as those designed for hot water washing.
- Never turn the dryer off before the cool down period is over. There have been fires resulting from clothing being left bunched up while still hot inside the dryer. Clothes dryers are designed to allow clothes to cool down before the cycle is finished.
- Install a smoke detector in your home. Smoke detectors alert occupants that smoke is present inside the house and can help save lives.