

## APPLIANCE DOCTOR

# If your dryer smells, it may need some air



JOE GAGNON

Dear Appliance Doctor:

The clothes in my 8-year-old gas dryer smell worse than a skunk. I'm currently using a clothesline, which is OK until I run out of clotheslines. My husband says we need a new dryer. Do we?

Mrs. Pat Brown,  
Farmington

Dear Mrs. Brown:

This problem experienced by many is such a simple thing it will amaze you. When a gas dryer is operating it is using 200 CFM (cubic feet of air) per minute. The American home today is sealed so tightly from outside air that the EPA says, "Indoor air may be more hazardous than outside air." When using your dryer, open a window to introduce fresh air into the house. I haven't been to your house, Mrs. Brown, nor have I been looking through the window, but I know that you have a project of some kind going on in there. You are painting or varnishing or something. Right? The other day a lady called me with the same problem and with a little question-and-answer period we determined what the problem was. The new window installer had used a caulking that gave out a strong odor. Any time your gas dryer is operating it needs air for combustion reasons just like your furnace does. It will draw air from all areas of the house, not just the laundry room. This air goes through the burner assembly and then into the drum. The wet clothes will hold the odor and you won't get rid of it until you wash them again. You just saved a service call, Mrs. Brown. Thanks for the great question.

Dear Appliance Doctor:

The clock on my 10-year-old electric range quit working. Short of buying a new clock, which I found out is \$120, can it be repaired?

Mrs. Gadaby,  
Southfield

Dear Mrs. Gadaby:

In the old days when Bill was playing in the NHL, the television repairman had a product in his toolbox called contact cleaner. Your picture was fuzzy and it looked like Bill was getting a bad penalty. You called the TV guy out, he came in and sprayed your tuner, and Bill looked good again.

That same product used then is now available to consumers at the local hardware store. Many people have put the clock back into operation by spraying the gears on the back of the timer assembly. Make sure you pull the cord or kill the power to the stove. By spraying the gears and turning the timer knobs at the same time, you may very well save yourself \$120. Please tell Bill, Detroit wishes him well.

Dear Appliance Doctor:

My washing machine fills with water ever so slowly. What part do I need to buy? I am a do-it-yourselfer, I think.

Roger Nordstrom,  
Redford

Roger, please don't buy anything to fix this problem. It's as easy as ABC. The water valve on the back of the washer is where the hot and cold lines attach. Inside the water valve you will see two screens that you can remove with a pair of tweezers or needle-nose pliers. Clean those screens under a faucet, replace them and you have just solved the problem. Now you are a do-it-yourselfer, no doubt.

Dear Appliance Doctor:

I checked the door on my upright freezer using a dollar bill and it slips out real easy. Do I need a new door seal?

Ken Carter,  
Westland

Ken, that method of checking a door seal went out with the 1950s refrigerator. It was used back then because you had a latch mechanism on the door and it was adjustable in many cases. Today's refrigerators and freezers use strictly a magnetic seal that can be checked by using a flashlight. Some of these seals can cost you more than \$100 just for the part. Turn the lights off at night and place a high-powered flashlight inside the product. Look around the perimeter of the door and use a mirror along the bottom edge. Where you see light, you are leaking. Take a hair dryer and heat the area of leakage on the seal itself. Stretch the seal outward. It has a tendency to come back to its original shape. If it's torn, visit the hardware store for some rubber glue. Coat the area with silicone seal and let it dry overnight. This tip has saved thousands across the country from spending hundreds.

Folks, in a previous column I mentioned a refrigerator booklet I wrote several years ago for the office of Detroit Consumer Affairs. Esther Shapiro has kindly given me permission to offer this booklet to the readers of the Observer and Eccentric newspapers. This free booklet is filled with money-saving tips on the refrigerator in your home. Here is how you can obtain this valuable piece of information: Send a self-addressed, stamped (32 cents), No. 10 business-size envelope (9 1/2 by 4 inches) to me at The Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Wait 10 days for delivery and keep saving money.

Joe Gagnon, the Appliance Doctor, will answer your questions about maintaining and repairing large appliances. Gagnon is president of Carmack Appliances in Garden City and does a weekly radio program on WJR-AM. He is author of "First Aid from the Appliance Doctor," available at area bookstores.

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