

HOME WORK

Specialty tools can be treasures

Unexpected problems can occur even in the best planned do-it-yourself projects. In such situations, the right specialty tools can be hidden treasures in your toolbox.

For example, the Craftsman Screw Remover kit takes the frustration out of extracting screws with stripped or damaged heads. Just chuck the 1/4-inch hex-shank screw remover bit into a reversible, variable speed 3/8-inch power drill. Set the drill on low speed and reverse. Place the screw remover in the center of the damaged screw, start the drill and apply downward pressure until the bit grabs the screw. The edges of the bit will dig into the screw's head and begin the removal process. The three-piece set covers screw sizes from No. 6 to No. 14 and accommodates Phillips, slotted, Torx and other common screw heads.


Do-it-yourselfers, especially auto enthusiasts, also can repair or renew damaged, nicked or burred threads on common sizes of nuts and bolts with the Craftsman 40-piece Master Retreading Set. Up until now, comprehensive retreading sets have not been readily available from retail outlets. The set cleans and repairs existing threads, rather than cutting new threads, which helps avoid the danger of cross-threading.

Magnetic pickup tools can save the day when fasteners, tools and other ferrous metal objects must be retrieved from hard-to-reach places.

The Craftsman Lighted Magnetic Pickup Tool sends a narrow light beam into darkened areas to help find the targeted object, and can lift up to five pounds.

Finally, dryer vent code may change

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

An article that recently appeared in the *Appliance Service News* in Chicago should have made headlines across the country. In early January, the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers proposed a revision of the National Fuel Gas Code and submitted it to the American Gas Association. The revision specified that clothes dryer exhaust and transition vents used in residential applications shall not be constructed of coiled-wire foil or plastic material. The proposal also emphasizes that dryer vents must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Venting about metal

AHAM recommends that vents should be constructed of rigid sheet metal or corrugated semi-rigid sheet metal. The current code does not contain material requirements for exhaust and transition vents. Without specific requirements, manufacturers are concerned that inadequate materials will be used.

Coiled-wire foil and plastic venting material can create a problem because both are susceptible to damage from bending or crushing during installation. Damaged vents can reduce airflow and result in the dryer cycling on its back-up safety devices. Coiled-wire foil and plastic venting material is also susceptible to tears and punctures.

That is how the story appeared. Now I will rewrite the story the way I see it.

AHAM is made up of representatives from the appliance man-

ufacturing end. This group has proposed a new code to the American Gas Association, which is responsible for standards across the United States. AHAM is asking that plastic and tin-foil vent line used on dryers be prohibited in this country.

What wasn't said

Officials fail to mention that the construction codes of Michigan banned its use back in January 1992. They also didn't mention that dryer fires occur at the rate of 15,000 per year in this country and that most of these are due to improper venting. They never informed us that several lawsuits have been lost by manufacturers due to these house fires. They didn't tell us that for many years the instruction book with a clothes dryer showed us how to install it with the use of flexible vent line. They didn't tell you that the safest way to install a clothes dryer is using the old fashioned solid aluminum vent line.

They should have said - "AHAM apologizes for not joining Joe Gagnon some 15 years ago when he went on his crusade to ban plastic and tin-foil vent line. Even though the Product Safety Commission and Underwriters Lab saw it his way, we were many years behind in reaction. His actions have saved lives and tragedy from occurring and we now believe this proposal will do the same for the rest of the country."

Maybe they should urge the retail stores across America to do what a hardware retail chain in Detroit has been doing for years. Damman hardware stores posted a sign near the dryer vents which states that plastic should not be used for clothes dryers. Maybe AHAM should have apologized for the delay.

I wish that someday AHAM will listen to what consumers have to say. At a recent seminar I asked the attendees if they thought major appliances were made better today than yesterday. Almost all of them broke out into laughter. I wished that AHAM could have heard their response.

Just imagine, how many lives could have been saved across America if AHAM and the American Gas Association were right there beside me when I did my first ABC Television appearance years ago, it would have been a great number. I'm complaining, but happy. They finally jumped on board. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard on *NewsTalk 760, WJR-AM*, every Saturday and Sunday mornings. He is a past president of the Society of Consumer Professionals. His second book, *"The Words and Wisdom of The Appliance Doctor"* is available in book stores. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

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