

HOME WORK

Let freezer stand for two hours before plugging it in

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Many readers of this column have a lot of money over the years from advice they read here. That is the column's true purpose. To give you an idea of how it helps consumers, let me review a few of the thousands of responses I've received.

The owner of Bill & Rod's Appliance called me the other day to inform me that I had cost his business \$40 because he had to give a customer a refund. He pointed out that he was happy to give the lady her money back, because it resulted in a valuable lesson for his service technicians and the owner himself.

Cold oil creates problem

The owner explained that his service technician went on a call during the first few days of January. The temperature had dropped to the 0° mark.

The technician diagnosed that a transmission was "bad" on a washing machine, because it was agitating so slowly. A few days later, the washing machine was agitating at a normal speed, only to slow down again when the temperature dropped.

The homeowner read a recent column on this very subject, then called Bill & Rod's and reported about what she had read. I wrote that if the wall behind the washer is an outside wall and the temperature of the oil in the transmission is real cold, the washer will not agitate at normal speed because the oil is too thick.

Now this owner named Kim who has been in this service business for many years was so honest, he called me to tell me

that he didn't know this fact, which the consumer had read. He sent the woman a total refund and thanked me for teaching him something.

That's what I call "close" and a good money-saving piece of information.

Freezer advice

Let's take the case of Joe W., who called me to tell me a service technician had been to his home and checked out his Gibson chest freezer. The technician told Joe he had a defective compressor. Joe paid for the service call, only to be told that the compressor replacement would cost more than the freezer was worth.

While talking with his mother, he tells her that he doesn't believe the service technician and is about to call someone else to come out and check it. His mother tells him about this column and suggests to him to call me, which he does.

If the temperature of the oil in the transmission is real cold, the washer will not agitate at normal speed because the oil is too thick.

Apparently Joe tipped the freezer on its side for six hours, and then sat it upright and immediately plugged it in. As I've written before, you should always let a refrigeration product sit in its normal position for at least two hours before plugging it in to let the oil migrate back to the bottom of the compressor. I informed Joe that the service technician was correct.

I reminded Joe that if he was a regular reader of this column like his mother, he could have saved the cost of a service call, or most importantly, the cost of a new freezer.

Closing affects consumers

It is with a sad note that Montgomery Ward has filed for bankruptcy after 128 years in

the retail business. This is another of those closings which will affect consumers who need warranty service on appliances.

Go back just a few years to when other appliance store chains went bankrupt, leaving thousands of customers holding the bag. Let's hope it doesn't turn out that way with this recent closing of one of America's giants.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson recently revealed a new recycling effort geared to prevent environmental damage by dismantling electronic equipment. This idea may not be as new as he thinks, as officials are doing it in Minnesota, Massachusetts, Florida and Japan.

I've written about this need in

the past and the severe need for such action. Patterson is showing his leadership capability and should be commended. (Now, if he can manage to get major appliances thrown into the mix with electronics and get those recycled as well, he has really done the job.)

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.

Do you have a question for the *Appliance Doctor*? Contact him care of Ken Abramczyk, At Home Editor, *Observer Newspapers*, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@aol.com. Look for Gagnon's suggestions in a future *Appliance Doctor* column.

Have you remodeled your home lately?

Do you have a remodeling project of which you are particularly proud? Did you redo your kitchen, basement, bathroom or living room?

We would like to hear from you so we can share your story with our readers about your project, any problems you faced and

solutions you developed. We want to share the immense satisfaction you felt once it was completed with our readers.

Send a summary of the project, photos of your home or room and phone numbers of where you can be reached during the day so we can contact

you. Send information to Ken Abramczyk, At Home Editor, *Observer Newspapers*, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail stories as text files and photos as color-jpegs at kabramczyk@aol.com.

HOME IMPROVEMENT CALENDAR

The Home Depot presents free "how-to" clinics every week for do-it-yourselfers. The clinics last approximately 30 to 45 minutes each and are taught by experienced Home Depot associates who cover step-by-step instructions on how to tackle a variety of home improvement projects. For more information about the clinics, contact your

local Home Depot store.

Scheduled in February are "How to Buy Carpet," 10 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "How to Install Pergo Flooring," 11 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "How to Install Ceramic Tile," 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "Faux Painting Techniques," 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "How to

Measure for Blinds," 7 p.m. Tuesdays; and "How to Install a Toilet," 7 p.m. Thursdays.

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Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co. in Walled Lake and Detroit. Call (800) 560-7474 toll-free. Have a plumbing question? Write to Jeffrey at Advance Plumbing Supply Co., 1977 W. Maple Rd., Walled Lake, MI 48390.

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