

The Inspector

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 4

ask the inspector

What should I look for when inspecting my washer and dryer?

The utility room is an often overlooked but all too essential part of the home. With the clothes washer and dryer, there are many

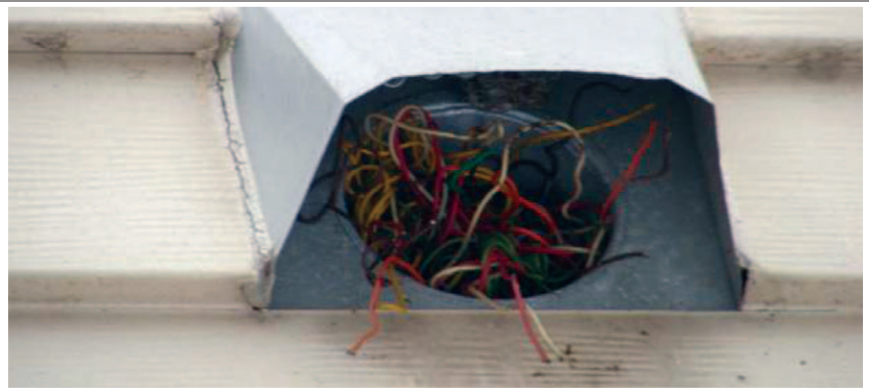


things that can go wrong, so it is essential to do occasional inspections. Make sure you check:

- **Washing Machine Level** – Check to make sure the air conditioner is level to ensure proper function.
- **Washing Machine Hoses** – Check the hoses for bulges, leaks and cracks. If a hose is damaged, it is best to replace it with a good quality, braided metal line.
- **Cleaning The Dryer Lint Trap** – Cleaning out lint trap should be done before every use of the dryer. Periodically clean inside, beneath, and behind the dryer.
- **Dryer Exhaust** – Check to make sure the venting is unobstructed, undamaged, and the right length to ensure proper air flow.
- **Vent Exit** – Make sure dryer air is blowing properly to the outside. If it is not, moist air and lint can blow back into the room causing all sorts of air quality problems.

If you find a problem that you can't fix or don't think you can handle, call a certified appliance technician to resolve the issue.

Snapshots from the field



Can you guess what is wrong with this photo?

- A.) The dryer vent hasn't been properly caulked around
- B.) The dryer vent was used as a conduit for telephone cable
- C.) The dryer vent doesn't match the siding color
- D.) The dryer vent is plugged by a bird nest built with wire

(answer on the back)

be advised

Spring has arrived and for some that can mean yard work. It is important to remember to be cautious while working outside. Here are a few tips to help you stay safe this spring:



- **Put Tools Away** - When not using shovels, rakes, clippers, or anything else that could injure someone, hang them up inside a shed or garage.

- **Store Hazardous Materials Properly** – Yard care products labeled caution, hazardous or poisonous should be safely locked away out of reach for children and pets.

- **Keep Chainsaw Blades Sharp** – A dull chainsaw blade can cause it to kick, which can result in a serious injury.

- **Refill Gasoline Carefully** – When your mower runs out of gas, make sure to let the engine cool before you refill. The vapor from the gasoline could catch fire if there is spark.

- **Goggles and Hearing Protection** – Whenever possible wear goggles and hearing protection when around powered yard tools.

- **Clean Up The Yard Before Mowing** – Pick up sticks, toys, and stones before mowing. These items can be kicked out by the blade and potentially hurt you or others.



Noteworthy News

maintenance matters

Nearly every staircase has at least one step that constantly squeaks when walked on. Generally it is not a sign of anything more than a loosening board, but it can still be annoying. The boards wear loose and rub against each other as they age causing a creaking noise. To find the problem area and fix it, you'll need to know a few things.

Staircases consist of treads, risers, and stringers. The treads are the boards that lay flat and support the weight of the person walking on them. The risers lay perpendicular to the tread and further support the treads. Finally, the stringers are the boards that support the entire struc-



ture of your staircase.

To assess where the squeak is coming from, you have to test each tread that makes noise. If you step on the front of the tread and it creaks, it usually means that it has separated from its riser. On the other hand, if the noise occurs when you step on the back of the tread, it means that it has separated from one of the three stringers.

You can fix either problem in basically the same way. Find where the current fasteners or nail holes are located and have someone stand or press against the tread to compress the boards. Drill two starter holes

where the loose connection is occurring at opposite 45 degree angles. You can hammer in two nails, which are slightly larger than your starter holes. To finish it off, just apply some wood putty and wipe clean.

Termites

Termites can cause severe structural damage if they are not caught in time. They can feed on anything made of wood. They move quickly and often work their way into the home. To reduce the risk of termites make sure to:

- Remove any scraps of wood or stumps near the house. Any wooden materials around the foundation can be a breeding ground for termites.
- Keep all shrubs and plants at least 5 feet from the house.
- Keep mulch and dirt at least 6 inches below your home's siding.
- Seal any openings around the foundation that could lead inside the house.
- Keep anything made of wood, such as, trellises 2 inches from the house.
- Use pressure treated wood when doing repairs to minimize rot.

If you see any signs of wood damage around the base of the house or inside, it is best to contact a home or pest inspector to see if pest control is needed. Termites are a hassle, but if they are caught in time damage can be minimized and you can save yourself further problems and additional costs.

Did You Know?

The ideal relative humidity for a home is between 30% and 50%. If indoor air is too humid, it can cause mold, mildew, and poor indoor air quality. If the air is too dry it may cause wood furniture and floors to dry out and create respiratory issues.

Snapshots from the field

The correct answer is D.) The dryer vent is plugged by a bird nest built with wire