

How to Clean a Clothes Dryer Vent

If your dryer vent hasn't been cleaned in the past year or two, it probably needs it. How do you clean it?

1. Unplug the dryer from both gas and electric. If you have a gas dryer, shut off the gas.
2. Pull the dryer out just to the extension of your vent. This is usually about 1 1/2 to 2 feet.
3. Using a screwdriver or nut driver, loosen the 4" clamp (vent clamp) on the back of the dryer.
 4. Slide the vent off the dryer.
 5. Reach into the hole on the back of the dryer, and pull out any lint and buildup. Reach in as far as you can. A shop or house vacuum cleaner can help reach inside and usually does a good job of removing the lint.
 6. Reach into the vent tubing you just took off and pull out lint from there, as well. The vacuum works well here also.
 7. Look at the ends. Most of the lint will build up at the ends (within a foot), and not so much in the middle of the vents. If you do find a large buildup in the middle, you can use a plumbing snake to pull it out. A coat hanger or dowel can also extend your reach if the path is fairly straight. However, these can get caught in the material and even cause leaks. Try the flexible hose on your vacuum cleaner to reach inside, whether it is running or not.
 8. Slide the clamp back over the vent. Reattach the vent, tighten the clamp, and slide dryer back into place.
 9. Remove the vent on the outside of the house as well. This one may have caulking around the cover, as well as screws. Use a razor knife to cut away the caulk. It may have a sleeve about a foot long. If this is the case, slide it straight out.
 10. Reach in and clean out the lint or insert your vacuum cleaner tubing into the dryer exhaust tubing. You can reach as far as your arm will go or use the vacuum tubing.
 11. Look into the vent to see if you missed anything. If it's out of reach use a plumber's snake or other tool (vacuum cleaner tubing).
 12. Turn on gas and plug unit back in.
 13. Run dryer on air fluff for 10 minutes. Debris you just loosened may fly out, so don't stand right outside.
 14. Recheck the outside vent for obstructions and reattach the outside vent.

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