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## **TIPS FOR APPLIANCE MAINTENANCE**

by A-Team Appliance Repair

Before beginning any tips for a consumer to diagnose or repair their own appliance without incurring the expense of a service company visit the following two things should be contemplated.

Most appliances are dangerous to work on without proper training or experience. Please remember when attempting to work on your appliance you risk serious injury or worse. Most electrical outlets carry more current than needed to cause death.

Since Florida produces more lightening and more power surges than any place else in the United States, proper surge protection should be obtained for all major appliances containing mostly electronic parts. These appliances include refrigerators, washers, dryers, dish washers, ranges, ovens and microwaves.

Purchasing power surge protectors from most stores does not provide adequate protection. A-Team highly recommends contacting your local power provider (Progress Energy, Florida Power, OUC or whichever one applies to you) and ask about a master surge protector installed outside of your home directly on your electrical box. In addition inquire as to plug-in types of surge protectors available through the same source. These are usually much more powerful than many sold in stores and can provide a huge source of protection resulting in fewer expensive repairs.

Always check your circuit breaker, or (in some cases) your fuse box, to see if the breaker needs to be re-set or the fuse needs to be replaced. This can save you the expense of a service company sending a technician to your home. If we go to your home and all that's wrong is a circuit breaker popped off, you will still be charged for a visit. However, be careful to check after you've reset the breaker that it doesn't happen again quickly. If it continuously trips, then you have a short circuit somewhere in the system, and unless you are qualified and have the proper safety training, you must call for service and have a technician trace, locate, and repair the short circuit. Failure to do so can result in unnecessary damage to your appliance... or even worse, house fire.

### **Refrigerator Tips**

1. If your refrigerator/freezer is not cooling, check to see if the door is closed tightly. A loose door seal can cause a huge loss of our cooling capacity resulting in higher electric costs and a shorter life for the refrigerator components. Often it is just either sticky syrup or food that spilled causing this problem. Cleaning it up with a mild detergent quite often solves the problem at no cost to you. If the door still doesn't seal tight, call A-Team Appliance Repair for a professional evaluation of the problem.
2. Check to see that the refrigerator/freezer is not over-filled so that cool air cannot properly circulate.
3. If moving your refrigerator always keep it in an upright position. Laying it on its side can cause an oil leak from the compressor and be very costly to repair.
4. Keep your refrigerator off of carpeting because most heat disbursement mechanisms are locate underneath and the carpet will absorb the heat not allowing for proper cooling.
5. Always plug the refrigerator directly into a wall outlet. Make certain that the outlet isn't a ground-fault breaker. A regular outlet should be used because a slight surge will trip the ground-fault breaker, making it appear as though the refrigerator is not operating at all. If an extension cord must be used, purchase one as short as you can use to reach the outlet and make sure it is labeled heavy duty.
6. When going on vacation remove food that will go bad, turn off the ice-maker switch (or the wire arm should be in the "up" position) but leave the refrigerator running.
7. Sweep or preferable vacuum dust or dirt from around the refrigerator. If you have pets, you should have your condenser coils cleaned on a regular basis.

## WASHING MACHINE TIPS

1. Make sure hoses are properly connected to the water faucets. Check regularly for leaks. Steel hoses sold at major box stores (or through the A-Team) can mitigate=2 0a hose which can burst. If practical, turn water faucets on and off before and after washing clothes. This can extend the life of the hose. It is recommended that you change hoses every 6 – 8 years.
2. Visually check your drain hose. Make sure there are no kinks or other visible problems with draining. If your machine has its drainage function restricted it can cause the water pump to over heat and stop working.
3. Take a small level and make sure that your machine sits on a solid flooring, and is level. Without being perfectly level your machine could be out of balance and either trip a safety switch (meant for that purpose) or cause loud banging and scraping noises which cause added wear and tear on your machine.
4. Use the proper kind and amounts of detergent. Too much detergent can cause “suds-lock” which prevents your machine from functioning at all. If this seems to be the problem, fill machine with cold water and put 2 cups of white vinegar in, then run your machine through a cycle.
5. If clothes are not spinning properly, during the last cycle, they will come out wetter than normal. This will cause your dryer to take twice as long and work twice as hard. If improper spinning seems to be a problem, call the A-Team for service.

## Dryer Tips

1. Always check, and empty your lint filter after each use for both effective drying and fire protection.
2. Do not over-load your dryer as it will take unusually long to dry everything or some of the clothes will remain damp. Also, over-loading uses excess electricity and causes moving parts to wear our much more quickly.
3. Do not place rugs or other items with rubber-foam backing in your dryer. Additionally, clothing items which are soiled by gasoline, grease, alcohol or other flammable substances should not be placed in the dryer to prevent possible fire.
4. Check and empty pockets of all clothing. Crayons, ink pens and certain other items can melt and cause damage to both the machine and especially the other clothing. Quite often a screw, nail, pencil or an under wire from a bra slip through the holes in the basket and cause the need for professional service to remove these items. This often requires taking apart the entire machine. If you feel such service is needed, call the A-Team.
5. If brown spots are observed on your clothing after the drying cycle is complete, the culprit may be your washing machine. These brown spots are often not visible while the clothing is still wet coming out of the washer. They show up more clearly after drying. The cause in many cases is rust particles from your hot water heater. These water heaters should be drained once a year (per many manufacturers instructions) but we tend to forget.
6. If your dryer is taking several cycles to dry your clothes, the cause may be the location of your vent. If you have a dryer in a fully enclosed interior room, (not against an outside wall) chances are your dryer is vented to the roof. This is okay if the vent was constructed properly, but, in many instances the vent goes up through the wall, makes a 90 degree turn in the ceiling, then another 90 degree turn to the roof. A dryer is only capable of pushing air about 30 feet. You must subtract 5 feet for each curve (starting at the bottom of your dryer) plus 5 feet for each 90 degree angle you cannot see. In addition you subtract another 10 feet for going up. It becomes easy to see that the hot air from the dryer is not able to reach the outlet on top and therefore causes your dryer thermostats to be satisfied sooner than they should be. The only solution is to re-vent the dryer.

## **RANGE AND OVEN TIPS:**

1. Carefully clean drip pans that are located under your burners. This way they can properly radiate heat, however, by covering these pans with aluminum foil you stand a serious risk of causing an electrical short.
2. Keep porcelain or glass cook tops clean by using a mild solution of baking soda and warm water.
3. Do not use oven cleaners in self cleaning ovens.
4. Self-cleaning ovens produce excessively high heat to burn food particles into ashes. Very often this self-cleaning feature causes other items to malfunction because of the excessive heat. Use the self-cleaning feature as seldom as possible, but always use warm water and a soft rag to clean your oven cavity.

## **DISHWASHER TIPS:**

1. Do not overload your dishwasher as it will cause the machine to not work at its peak capabilities.
2. Do not fill the machine with more detergent than recommended in the instructions. Doing so may cause leaks. NEVER USE DISHWASHING DETERGENT (SUCH AS DAWN) IN YOUR DISHWASHER.
3. Once every couple of months (depending upon amount of use) run an empty dishwasher with cold water and 1 cup of white vinegar through a cycle. This will help clean, deodorize, and sanitize odors and hard water buildups.
4. Check regularly to make sure your dishwasher is balanced. If not properly balanced it will make funny noises and cause excessive wear and tear. To correct this situation remove the bottom panel, shut the circuit breaker, and adjust the four legs on the bottom with a wrench until level.
5. Check your spray arm to make sure that holes are not clogged. If they are, use a tweezers to remove any debris.

**Proudly Serving Seminole, Orange, Lake and Osceola Counties**  
**A-Team Appliance Repair is an IHSP In Home Service Professional**

**We Repair ALL Makes and Models**