

**AVENBURY LAKES
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE
SAVINGS & SAFETY TIPS**

#1

Dryer Vent Cleaning: When's the last time your dryer vent, not just your dryer lint filter, has been cleaned? I cleaned mine about three weeks ago, so I speak from personal experience. It took me over an hour and I got enough lint out to fill a medium sized garbage bag.

The metal vent was so clogged that I had to use a flexible metal snake to break through it and had to go into the attic area and take the metal duct work apart to clean it out. It still is not as clean as it should be but at least the risk of a fire has been drastically reduced.

Safety: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates 15,000 fires associated with clothes dryers occur annually. These fires account for an average of 10 deaths, 310 injuries and at least \$ 84,000,000 in property damage annually. Clogged dryer vents can also lead to mold issues, since a full load of wet clothes contains about ½ gallon of water. Clogged vents also increase run time and therefore energy costs are higher.

Bathroom Exhaust Fans: Bathroom exhaust fans, the 3" vent and the outdoor soffit grill should also be cleaned periodically to prevent build up of lint in the vent system. Usually when the cover grill in the bathroom is looking pretty dusty and dark on the surface, it's a good time to think about a thorough cleaning.

Heating/Cooling Duct Systems: All kinds of debris can be hiding in this duct system. Construction materials, such as plaster dust, sawdust, household dust, and some types of bacteria. If you've never had your system cleaned, you probably should. The furnace filter and main blower will not keep the system from accumulating the above items. A clean duct system improves air flow and therefore, heating and cooling efficiencies.

You will also have to change your filter less often. By the way, be sure to use a pleated filter for better filtration and to help keep your blower motor and indoor evaporator coil clean.

Outdoor Air Conditioning Condenser: Your outdoor unit needs to be kept free of debris and surrounding vegetation. This can be done by simply clearing the area around the unit by at least a foot and flushing out noticeable debris from the unit with a garden hose. Shut off the unit while you do this and

try to get most of the debris off by aiming the hose from the top at a 45 degree angle. If you are unable to or don't wish to do this, get a preventive maintenance agreement with a reputable contractor.

Programmable Thermostats: I've written about these before. Quite simply they save energy and money. And, who doesn't want to do that? They pay for themselves very quickly and can be programmed to fit individual lifestyles for those who live here year round or travel to a warmer climate in the colder months. If they are battery operated, be sure to change the batteries every year.

The Business Office has a list of contractors and volunteers that can address any of the above concerns if needed.