

How to Avoid Unnecessary Service Calls for Laundry Appliances

Prepared by BERNICE STRAWN
Home Management and Equipment Specialist, Oregon State University, Corvallis

Consumers pay millions of dollars every year for unnecessary household appliance service calls.

Repair men say that from 30 to 50 percent of all the calls they make to service major appliances are unnecessary. Many problems could be handled by the consumer herself, thereby sparing her considerable inconvenience as well as money. However, consumers should not try to make mechanical repairs themselves, especially during the warranty period, or the warranty will not remain in force.

When you are shopping for an appliance, ask about service. Do not buy from a dealer who cannot direct you to an authorized parts and service agency. Buy only when you have assurance that good service will be available when you need it.

Be sure the appliance is properly installed. Inquire if a trained person is available to do the job. Service men find that up to three-fourths of the problems result from improper installation. Think twice before installing the appliance yourself.

Cost of service calls

Although the cost per call may have gone up in many areas, the improvement in reliability of appliances has exceeded the rate of increase for service. The net result, in most cases, is lower maintenance costs for the consumer.

Remember, you are paying for the service man's time. Do not chat with him!

The increase in cost for calls is due to higher wages, truck maintenance costs, and other expenses. Therefore, it is more important than ever for the homemaker to avoid the expense of unnecessary service calls.

Cause of Unnecessary Calls

Every appliance has its own set of instructions. These should be carefully read. One of the main reasons for service calls is lack of understanding the correct method of operating the equipment. It is a mistake to assume that your new appliance operates the same way as your previous one.

Oversight is another problem which causes unnecessary service calls. The owner may assume that sudden failure means a breakdown of the equipment and call a service man without investigating the situation.

Minor causes of failure

- The plug may have been knocked out of the outlet or not be plugged in securely.

- The appliance plug may be at fault. Sometimes the prongs are bent or are slightly spread apart so they do not make contact in the outlet. Try turning the plug over before plugging in again, or straighten the prongs or press them closer together. Also, check the condition of the plug itself.

- The outlet may be at fault. Try plugging a lamp into the outlet. If the lamp does not light then, the trouble may be caused by the outlet. Try another outlet.

- Check the condition of the cord. Make sure it is securely attached to the plug and to the appliance. Note if there are any broken wires. Replace frayed cords or those with broken covers.

- If you must use an extension cord (this is not recommended for major appliances), be sure it is heavy enough for the appliance. The trouble may be in the extension cord. Try another cord or, if possible, eliminate the extension cord.

- A fuse may have blown or a circuit breaker tripped. Know where the fuse or circuit breaker panel is located. Replace fuse or reset breaker.

- Some appliances come equipped with their own circuit breakers. This is a small protruding button. If the appliance has a circuit breaker, push once and release. The instruction manual will tell you where to find this circuit breaker on your appliance. (It is necessary to allow a motor to cool a few minutes before the breaker can be reset.)



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Laundry Equipment

Service calls have been markedly reduced on washers made during the past decade. Manufacturers' records show that *valid* service calls declined 73 percent since 1959, but *unnecessary* calls still continue. Today about one owner in three needs service on a washer during the first year.

Performance of an appliance during the first few months of use is a fairly reliable measure of how it will perform in years to come. Parts that are going to fail because of defect or weakness in design will nearly always fail during the first year. This is assuming normal use.

Washer problems

Note points on other side of page under "Minor causes of failure" and check your instruction book.

If your washer does not function properly, check the following:

- Are the hot and cold water supply valves leading to the washer turned on?
- Are hoses kinked or hose strainers clogged?
- Is the loading door open?
- Is the load out of balance?
- Is load too heavy? Check overload reset button. Remove part of load.
- Check controls. Some washers will not operate if two different cycle buttons have been pushed at the same time.

If the washer vibrates:

- Is the load unbalanced?
- Is only one large item being washed? Try to distribute the load evenly or add another smaller item to help balance the load.
- Is the washer level and sitting solidly on all four legs?

If the suds return does not work:

- Is hose kinked or in the correct position?
- Are there too many suds?
- Is the end of the hose down in the saved water?

Money savers for washers

- Remove all articles from pockets of garments. These can cause mechanical problems in the washer.
- Put small items such as anklets or hankies in a mesh bag. These can float out of the wash basket, clog the drain, and cause trouble with the pump. (Service men say this is a frequent cause of service calls.)
- Be sure to turn controls the right way. For some washers this is important. Check your instruction book.

- If the water level of the washer is adjustable, be sure to use enough water in proportion to the size of the load. Use of too little water may cause the motor to burn out because it has to work harder to turn the clothes. Excessive wear and sometimes tears in the garment may result.

- The washer should be leveled and sitting solidly on all four legs for best operation and to prevent undue friction on parts.

- A separate electric circuit is desirable for the washer. It should be grounded for safety.

- Know the model number and serial number of your washer before you call for service.

Dryer problems

Generally speaking, dryers have been relatively service free. In case of trouble, be sure to check your instruction book and the last two points under the section, "Minor causes of failure" elsewhere on this sheet.

If the dryer stops:

- Check controls for proper setting.
- Is the door closed tightly?
- For a gas dryer, are the main valve and pilot light turned on fully?
- Has a belt or hook of a garment caught on the edge of the drum?

If clothes dry slowly:

- Is lint trap clogged? Is it properly in place?
- Is exhaust vent blocked?
- Were clothes unusually wet when put in the dryer?

If dryer vibrates or creeps:

- Is dryer level and resting solidly on the floor? Adjust leveling legs. The appliance should be as low on the legs as possible.
- Remove any wax build-up from tile floors.

Money savers for dryers

- Empty lint trap after each day's use.
- For a filtrator type dryer, wash filtrator periodically. Empty tray at bottom of dryer after each load if it is not piped to drain. The water tray should be washed occasionally.
- Do NOT use dryer for drying articles treated with flammable solvents.
- Wipe out the drum with a damp cloth after drying heavily starched or tinted clothes.
- Be sure dryer is level and sitting solidly on all four legs.
- Check details in instruction book.
- Clean exterior with damp cloth, wax occasionally.