

## Appliance Repair Show Transcript—June 24, 2007

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### Topics Discussed:

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### **2004 Amana Refrigerator, Model ATB1915HRQ, with Intermittent Cooling Problem and Compressor Making Buzzing Noise**

JOHN SOWDEN

Let's grab our first call, which is Carl.

CARL

Good morning! I have an [Amana refrigerator](#). The [model number is ATB1915HRQ](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

CARL

First of all, it's only about three years old. And it works perfectly fine for two weeks and then it doesn't work for twenty four to thirty or thirty eight hours, and then it starts working perfectly fine for another two and a half weeks. This has been going on for the last two months and I'm kind of going broke replacing the food.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you say it doesn't work, do you mean the thing runs but doesn't cool, or is it dead? You don't hear any sound coming from it?

CARL

Well, when the compressor goes to kick on, I hear a buzzing sound. The [fan](#) in the back that cools the compressor, that's running. The fans on the inside of the unit are running, but [there's no cold air](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

So the compressor, it doesn't always start, then?

CARL

That's what it sounds like. It sounds like it's supposed to, you know how you can hear the compressor kick on, and then it just gives a buzzing sound and there's no cold air that comes in. But all the [fans](#) and everything seem to work and it's really clean behind there.

JOHN SOWDEN

That was going to be my next question, is have you made sure that the condenser is clean. From what you're describing, it sounds like you have an intermittent problem. That's probably the [relay overload](#) package on the compressor that's causing it to intermittently start. Especially if it runs a long time and the compressor gets hot, it takes a little more current draw sometimes to get it started. I would suspect the relay overload on the compressor for that. If it is the compressor trying to start, that tells you that the other controls are generally okay; the [thermostat](#) is working properly and it's calling for refrigeration. It's either that, or it could be that the compressor itself is failing. You've got a valve or something sticking in there that's causing it to lock up periodically.

CARL

But you think it's the [relay overload](#)? Any idea how long? Is it something I can fix, or is it something that requires a professional?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, those are the components that are mounted to the outer shell of the compressor; they normally just kind of plug on. There are three pins there and a few wires. It's something that the average do-it-yourselfer, if they take their time and mark the wiring, etc., can achieve.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Would there be a diagram?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sometimes. Sometimes replacement [overloads](#) and relays are for several different models, so they come with instructions and you have to determine which unit you particularly have so you can wire things correctly. And if you run into problems, you can always call for service at that time. That's what I would guess at, from what you're describing.

CARL

Okay. And any idea what that might cost? Just a general ball park in case I get a professional, and he says well it's six hundred dollars and I get somebody else and he says it's eight dollars. A ball park where I could say, well that sounds reasonable?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it's going to be somewhere in between there. I would say, mostly the parts run between thirty and sixty dollars for something like that. A service call basically is a matter of what the people charge. Some have a flat rate system, some have an hourly rate, but all together for a job like that I'd say the average is between a hundred and a hundred and fifty dollars, if that's all you require.

CARL

Okay. Well great, I appreciate that. Thank you.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And I'd guess that one hundred and fifty dollars would be better spent there than restocking the [refrigerator](#) all the time.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. It gets expensive.

### **Kitchen Aid Hobart Dishwasher Timer Won't Advance Automatically**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's a [dishwasher](#) question from Ray, in Romulus, on the Appliance Repair Show.

RAY

I've got a [Kitchen Aid](#), made by Hobart, which is probably nine hundred years old. Anyway, this thing cleans beautifully! The girlfriend thinks it's the greatest thing she's ever had. The only problem with it is the [timer](#); it's got a Singer timer on it. And you have to twist it just a hair to make it start. It will run through the whole cycle and stop, and you have to twist it with a pair of pliers just a click, and then away it goes to do the next load.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

RAY

Where could I get a Singer [timer](#) for an old, old [Kitchen Aid](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it depends on how old of an old Kitchen Aid it is. Is the timer on the top of the [control panel](#), or down on the bottom near the [kick plate](#)?

RAY

It's right behind the kick plate. I've got the kick plate off and I just stick a pair of pliers on the handle and just click it.

JOHN SOWDEN

This is on the lower part of the [dishwasher](#)?

RAY

Yes it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's an older unit.

RAY  
I know!

JOHN SOWDEN  
Those [timers](#) have been discontinued for quite some time. There are some companies that do rebuild them.

RAY  
Well, that's good!

JOHN SOWDEN  
You can search the internet. Or, you can send us an email. Go to the "[Contact Us](#)" section on [Repairclinic.com](#), and we should be able to have somebody...

RAY  
Wait! You talk of the internet, but I'm very old.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Okay.

RAY  
I was born just a little bit before dirt, and I can't even program a phone. I don't do internet and all that business.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Okay. Probably the best thing to do would be to call us then. Our eight hundred number is 1-888-343-4948, and we're open from eight to midnight EST, seven days a week. So you can give us a call and talk to one of our operators and tell them that you're looking to have a [timer](#) rebuilt and they'll try to get you the information.

RAY  
Thank you.

### **Gas Oven Lighting Up While In the Off Position**

JOHN MCCULLOCH  
We have a question on a [stove](#) from Chuck, in Trenton, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Chuck.

CHUCK  
Yes, I've got a [gas stove](#). The oven is in the off position and I can hear it lighting up.

JOHN SOWDEN  
You have it in the off position? Does this have a [circuit board](#) with buttons or is it a dial, where you have a [thermostat](#) on it?

CHUCK

It's a [gas oven](#) with a thermostat. But it's got a glow bar [igniter](#) on it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. But even in the off position you're getting....

CHUCK

I can hear it fire up.

JOHN SOWDEN

Wow! Really, one of the few things that can cause this would be some sort of a ground in the system that's causing it to constantly have power. Or, more than likely the contacts in the oven [thermostat](#) are sticking closed, which you can check with an [ohmmeter](#). But that's about the only two things on a straightforward thermostat system that could cause it to do that.

CHUCK

All right. Okay. So, it's either the contacts in the [thermostat](#) you say or what else?

JOHN SOWDEN

Occasionally, you get a wiring problem where there could be a wire touching the frame that's providing a path of electricity to this. That's pretty rare, but as soon as I tell you not to look for that, that's probably what it is.

CHUCK

All right. Thank you.

### **2006 Asko Dishwasher Not Draining All the Water**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a [dishwasher](#) question, Tom, on the Appliance Repair Show.

TOM

I have an [Asko dishwasher](#). My problem is it's [not emptying all the water out](#). This is a second home that we just bought in Algonac, and the appliances have been in the home, but it's like brand new. It might have been sitting for a year or so. It fills, it goes through the cycle, but there's too much water in there and the water went all over the floor. I emptied it out, and tried it again, and I siphoned the water off and tried the cycle and it's still doing the same thing.

JOHN SOWDEN

So basically, you get too much water in the [dishwasher](#) as you run it through the wash cycle, and then it overflows?

TOM

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

And [it doesn't drain at all](#)?

TOM

It drains...it doesn't drain it all. It leaves water in the bay down there, whatever you want to call it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Well, this unit has a separate [drain pump](#) for it, so you could have something caught in that pump. At times, glass and things like that get stuck in the pump and break some of the impellers off. So, even though the pump is turning, it doesn't have enough force to push the water up and out the drain. So that's where I would start, is probably a physical inspection of the drain pump assembly and see if that's your problem in there. You can normally see if the blades on the impellers are broken off.

TOM

It could be a toothpick in there or anything?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. And if it's been sitting for a while, it could be that pump assembly is freezing up at times, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Or, the motor could be bad.

TOM

So I should take the [drain pump](#) assembly apart and see what's in there?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's what I would do. You can remove the cover on those—it's kind of a push and turn to get the plastic cover off that drain assembly.

TOM

Okay. And you access it through the front [door](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, although these newer units, they call them tall tub appliances, and what happens is you have a lot less room underneath them to work. So, you may actually have to pull this unit out in order to gain access to this. If you can get your hands underneath there and get at it by removing the front and the lower [kick plate](#) assembly, that's great, but a lot of times you have to pull those out to work on them.

TOM

Okay. Sounds great. Thank you very much.

**1997 Kenmore Dehumidifier Icing Up in Basement**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to Frank, he has a question on a [dehumidifier](#) here on the Appliance Repair Show.

FRANK

I have a [Kenmore dehumidifier](#), and it's about ten years old. I use it down in the basement. The thing just [ices up](#) something terrible! It's usually about sixty four or sixty five degrees down there, and I realize that's kind of a fine line for it, but now even at sixty seven the thing just ices up. Does somebody make one that will work in cooler temperatures?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, [dehumidifiers](#), you do need to have the temperature up a little bit, because what they do is they get that evaporator coil as close to freezing as they can to draw as much moisture as possible. But obviously, you don't want it to ice over. Normally, sixty four sixty five degrees is, as you pointed out, kind of pushing it for the kind of temperature you want to run it in. One thing you can try is getting it off the floor. If you've got a counter down there, just to try it, and get it off the basement floor and that might give it a few degrees of variance to keep it from icing over. If it [continues to ice over](#), or if you take it upstairs and run it and it ices over, most often that's a leak in the refrigeration system. To answer your question about if there are ones you can run in low ambient temperatures, most of them will still recommend that you run them above sixty five degrees, but some of them have a [thermostat](#) mounted on them; a [de-icing thermostat](#) is what they call them. Once the unit ices over it shuts it off and lets it de-ice; so they kind of work around that problem by putting an additional control in there.

FRANK

Yeah, I thought I heard about one that would work in the fifty degree temperature. Because it's always cool down there and I have all my ducts taped over so there won't be any air conditioning air coming down there, but it's still pretty cool down there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, I'm not aware of one that will run at fifty degree temperatures, but that doesn't mean that one hasn't been made. More than likely they've got some [controls](#) on it that will turn it on and off in response to the ambient temperature and when it starts to freeze.

FRANK

It's probably like a refrigerator, like the ones that defrost themselves and so on?

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Once it gets to a certain temperature and that coil gets too cold, it shuts it off. You might actually be able to put a [de-icing kit](#) on your model. I'd have to look and see if one's available, but normally that's about fifty dollars, and you have to wire it in. It's a ten year old [dehumidifier](#), and you're at about half the cost of that, so it might not be worth it. But just to see if there's a problem with the system or not, I'd try running it

either off the floor, or again, take it upstairs, outside, somewhere where you know it's warm enough. And, if it still ices over, then you probably need to replace it anyway.

FRANK

Okay. Thanks a lot.