

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—December 02, 2007

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2000 GE Gas Range Flashing Code F2

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Right to the phones with a [GE stove](#) problem with Joe, in Troy, on the News Talk Radio 760 Appliance Repair Show, which is sponsored by [RepairClinic.com](#). Good morning, Joe. Go ahead please.

JOE

Hi guys. I've got a question regarding this oven that we have. Before I buy a part, I'm trying to troubleshoot it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, what's it doing or not doing?

JOE

Well, for years, it's only about seven years old. For years, when the wife is baking over three fifty, after a while it will flash [F2](#); we just kind of put up with that. But now the oven is going on and off intermittently. Today [it doesn't want to bake](#) at all. We put it on clean; which we haven't done for a real long time, and it fired up for almost an hour and then it shut down again. And, I had a repairman out last week and he really didn't do any good for us. He did check the oven temperature, it looks like the [thermostat's](#) working on

and off appropriately, but I'm wondering if it's the electronic card on the top of the stove that may be shot or something.

JOHN SOWDEN

So it's been going on for quite a while. Is this a built-in unit?

JOE

No, it's a [freestanding gas range](#) and oven.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well we have all the [fault codes](#) listed on our website, of what could be. A lot of the F2 is it's sensing an excessive temperature.

JOE

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

A lot of times that's either the [control board](#) reading a false reading or the [oven sensor](#), that's the small part that looks like about half a pencil sticking out the back of your oven, is starting to lose it's tolerance. As the temperature increases in the oven, the resistance changes on that sensor and it sends that signal back to the control board. I would start with checking that oven sensor. Normally, at room temperature it's going to read between a thousand and eleven hundred ohms, and if it's way beyond that variance I would start by replacing that. And that's also the cheapest component to replace. The clock-circuit board model is probably going to be over one hundred dollars—

JOE

Yeah, I looked on your website and it's about one hundred and twenty dollars.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

JOE

I want to try and figure out what the right part is before I go and buy one.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Well, at times if the [sensor](#) checks good, all you can do is kind of multiple guess on those because it's either the sensor is failing or it is intermittent or the [control board](#) thinks it is, so I'd start with the sensor and if worse comes to worse you could replace them both and you'd have the open temperature monitoring devices all replaced just in time for those Christmas cookies.

JOE

Yeah. Are you guys local, could I buy the parts on your website?

JOHN SOWDEN

We have a parts counter, and I'm glad you asked the question! Our main office is on Michigan Avenue and Beck Road in Canton, Michigan. If you're driving down Michigan Avenue you'll see the big building that says RepairClinic.com on it. And our hours are eight to six, seven days a week, so we're open right now.

JOE

All right. I appreciate it.

Listener Calling Back with a Compliment Related to a Gas Range

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's John, from Wyandotte, whom we've talked to before. John, good morning. Go ahead.

JOHN

Hi, John. You guys are the best. You've given my wife a new lease on life! I had a question last week on our stove, the [stove wouldn't start](#), it took forever, and then you said to take a little wire brush and clean down the ...

JOHN SOWDEN

The pilot assembly.

JOHN

Yeah, I guess it's the carbonation and oxidation.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

JOHN

And it just lit perfect! Thank you very much for the advice!

JOHN SOWDEN

It was a very lucky guess, John. Thank you for calling, we appreciate your comments.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Yeah, it's nice to hear from somebody who had a good experience.

JOHN SOWDEN

And didn't have to spend any money to fix his appliance!

Side by Side Refrigerator Not Dispensing Water and Ice Cubes are Small

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a problem with a side by side fridge, Shirley, in Toledo, Ohio on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

Yes. My side by side, I'm not getting any water. Maybe a few drips from the dispenser of water, and the [ice cubes look like little shells](#), thin as anything. Is there a [filter](#) that's accessible? What do you think is causing it?

JOHN SOWDEN

From what you're describing that's the first thing I would lean towards, is that the water supply is low and that's why you're starving both the [icemaker](#) and the water in the door. Whether your particular unit has a filter inside it or part of the refrigerator is something that we'd need a model number for. You can get the [model number](#) off the model serial tag, and—

SHIRLEY

I tried to get the book last night. I could not find it. I pulled the refrigerator out, thinking there'd be something on the back; I even took the lower cardboard base at the bottom I took that off. I can see nothing!

JOHN SOWDEN

Here's the thing. You never have to do that to get a model number. They normally make it front-accessible. It's going to be on a sticker inside the refrigerator section, either up towards the ceiling. Or, at times, they hide it on the side wall—

SHIRLEY

Oh, I got it! I got it!

JOHN SOWDEN

There you go. So what you do is go to our website and put the model number into [RepairClinic.com](#). It will show you if you have a filter or not. Most of them will be down near the kick plate if you have a little round looking disk in the [kick plate](#)---

SHIRLEY

I see the plate up high, not too far from the [light bulb](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, right.

SHIRLEY

Now I call whom, then?

JOHN SOWDEN

[Repairclinic.com](#). And that number to call is 1-888-34-FIXIT. And they can tell you if your refrigerator has a filter or not. If in fact it does then it's probably restricted. If it doesn't, then you have a water supply problem going to your refrigerator. The line itself going to it is either restricted, or the [water valve](#) has gotten plugged up. Most new units do have a [filter](#) in them, and if you haven't changed it, that's probably the problem,

you're starving it for water. Take it from there you have a little homework to do, and hopefully you'll get it working in no time.

1997 GE Glass Top Range with Melted Plastic on the Burner

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thank you, Shirley. And here's another Shirley, from Saint Clair Shores, with some melted plastic on the stove, a familiar problem to John this week.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Good morning, Shirley. Go ahead, please.

SHIRLEY

Good morning. I have a [GE glass top stove](#), and on Thanksgiving I was in a hurry, getting things on the table and I laid a plastic bun warmer on the hot [large front burner](#), not knowing that it had just been on. It started smoking and as we took it off the strings of the plastic just melted on to it. I have tried a number of different things, I've talked to the GE customer service, and I've tried to heat it up and then turn it off and start working at it with a wooden spoon, which burned the end of the wooden spoon. I've tried using Goop-Off when it's cool.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

SHIRLEY

That helped a little bit, so now I've got it thinned out, I've got some of the edges cleared but the middle of it, I've tried several different things and they're not working. Replacing it isn't an option.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, basically heating it up is something that's good because it softens the plastic. You don't want to turn it on high and burn it off. Once you just get the surface warm, warmer than you'd want to put your hand on it, but certainly not real hot. And then, I'm surprised—normally your unit will come with a [razor blade scraper](#), and that's what you use to get the tougher stains off the glass cook tops and it's similar to a razor blade knife you'd use to clean up paint around your windows. You can pick one up at a hardware store; we have them in the [Accessories section](#) of our website. I think they're under two dollars; it's basically just a straight blade razor with a handle so you don't cut yourself, and I would heat it up a little bit and then gently go after it with a nice sharp razor blade. Take your time and you can probably get it back into pretty good shape.

SHIRLEY

My nephew had used a knife, and that scratched the corners of it.

JOHN SOWDEN

SHIRLEY

So the razor blade is...

JOHN SOWDEN

A flat surface; if you go after it with a knife you're going to put nicks in the glass and you don't want to do that because it ruins the integrity of it and it can over time cause it to shatter. So I would—most units come with a razor blade and a tube of [cook top cleaner](#), is normally—

SHIRLEY

Well this is about ten years old, and I don't remember it coming with a razor but I can get it from the hardware store, that's not a problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure, and basically the razor blade knife, you can lay it flat on the stove and you're not digging in on the corners and less likely to scratch it. You just have to take your time. It's one of those labor-intensive jobs that you're in for here.

SHIRLEY

Okay. I appreciate your help. Thank you.

1995 GE Profile Refrigerator Making a Loud Clunking Noise

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Now we talk to Rich, in Ortonville, about a Profile refrigerator [making noises](#) that it shouldn't, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Rich, go ahead.

RICH

I have a [GE Profile](#) refrigerator, [side by side](#); it's about twelve years old. What it's been doing since the Thanksgiving holiday is when the compressor turns off we hear almost like a [clunking sound](#) from underneath.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, a loud thump, it almost sounds like somebody's taken a hammer to a metal plate?

RICH

Yes. So we pulled it out and we ended up vacuuming all of the cat hair and everything out. I watched it and it's definitely coming from what I'm not sure if it's the compressor, but it's the black thing that looks like a bowling ball.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that's the compressor, and what's happened is internally on the compressor, the motor and pump that runs and circulates the refrigerant through the system is mounted on

a set of springs, and when one of those springs breaks internally, when it shuts off the motor and pump assembly slap against the outer metal shell.

RICH

Am I on borrowed time with this?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. I've seen them run for literally years and years like that but eventually it will slap and damage one of the valves or crack the casing or something and so as far as immediate problem, probably not, but I would start looking at either replacing the [compressor](#) or the unit. You can just wait until it conks out on you and do it then, but, unfortunately, it always happens when you're on vacation or sometime when you don't want it to happen. Yeah, it's something that there's nothing you can do for it because it is all hermetically sealed within that.

RICH

It's all internal, okay. Because I did look on that external rubber bushing to see if it was that, and it was none of those.

JOHN SOWDEN

No. And at times you can change those bushings and that will help a little bit, but overall if it's broken internally there's not much you can do.

RICH

Okay. I appreciate the help guys.

Stackable Washer/Dryer Being Used In a Vacation Home without Heat

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to Scott, in Tecumseh, with concern about a stackable [washer](#) and [dryer](#) here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Scott, go ahead please.

SCOTT

Thanks for taking my call, John. We've got a vacation home in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that we do not heat in the wintertime. We're looking at putting a stackable washer and dryer in, but I was concerned about the fact that we don't heat it, and if the freezing of the washing machine would actually damage the washing machine. The appliance place that we talked to, the sales people say that they test those things and they have water in them when they come to the store, and they didn't think it would be an issue, that there'd be enough room for the expansion if it froze. Can you give me some ideas on that?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. They do take periodically some of the units off the assembly line and test them, and they are shipped with some water in them. I've had situations where I've went out on a brand new washing machine that wouldn't work because the [pump](#) was frozen and it

couldn't turn which locked the [motor](#) up, because the warehouse wasn't heated where it was sold from. So any kind of water-ice buildup inside is going to cause either a cracked pump or other problems, but you could also use RV antifreeze, stuff like that when you winterize your cabin. Just take off the [drain hoses](#) and drain the unit as best you can, including disconnecting it from the wall for the incoming water supply. Pour a little of that RV antifreeze or the like in there, and when you get in there in the Spring you can go ahead and flush it out a few times. That's what most people do to address that problem.

SCOTT

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But otherwise if you leave it unheated with water in it, more than likely the water in the [pump](#) is going to freeze, expand, most of the pumps are plastic and you'll end up with a crack.

SCOTT

That was my concern. Now when you put the RV antifreeze in, do you just back flush that through the water supply line, just like you were running water in it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally you just pour it into the tub itself, and it will go down into the pump housing and the [hoses](#). As far as the incoming water supply, as I said I would just disconnect that. And then on the other side of the [water valve](#) the tube going from the water valve to the main intake, if it's got a sump in it that would hold water you'd go ahead and disconnect it and shake it out.

SCOTT

Okay, but as far as just pouring that into the tub, enough of that will just drain down into the [pump](#) that that should take care of it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

SCOTT

Great. I appreciate the help.

Maytag Gas Range Filling with Gas and Not Heating

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a problem with a [Maytag oven](#), Mike in Sterling Heights, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Mike, go ahead please.

MIKE

Good morning, thanks for taking my call. I have a [Maytag gas range](#). The stovetop is working just fine, however the oven is filling up with gas and [it won't heat](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

So you smell gas? Does it ever blow the oven door open every once in a while?

MIKE

No, it hasn't done that yet.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, generally what happens is the [igniter](#) is weak, and the igniter, even though it might be glowing bright red, it's based on current draw of the igniter and not how bright it glows. A lot of people make the mistake of thinking that if they see the igniter glowing then it must be okay, but it has to draw a certain amount of current and over time they get weak and what happens is when it gets to that point, it draws enough to open the [gas valve](#) a little bit and then not stay open. So it's kind of intermittently pulsing the gas valve, so you get a gas buildup but not enough to ignite. That's why I asked; on occasion you see this occur when it builds up enough gas, when it finally does light, the oven door will kind of thump open and closed a little bit. I would start with the igniter, that's the most common failing part for the problem you describe.

MIKE

Okay, that can be accessed from the back, I assume?

JOHN SOWDEN

It depends. Normally you have to either take the oven floor out, which when you look at it there's a few locking tabs in the back, take the [racks](#) out and you can get at it that way. Other oven styles you have to get at the igniter through the lower storage drawer which pops out and you can see it from there. It just depends on the style.

MIKE

I was able to look at it. I can see it from the storage underneath. I can see it glowing so I assumed that wasn't the problem, but...

JOHN SOWDEN

Everybody does, everybody buys a gas valve and spends a lot of time wrenching and changing the gas valve only to find that the oven [igniter](#) is in fact the problem.

MIKE

Okay. We'll give that a try.

1984 GE Built-In Double Oven Clock Is Running Slow

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a problem with a double oven, Sue in Clinton Township on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Sue.

SUE

Hi. I've got a [built-in double self-cleaning oven](#). It's a [GE](#) and it's about twenty-three years old. Every thing works just fine, except a couple days ago I noticed the [clock](#) is running slow, because everything else is working I'm assuming that's on a separate little thing. Can I just hire an outside electrician and just get the part from someplace?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the clock running slow on those units, they're mechanical clocks, so the motor could be stalling or you could have a stripped gear that's causing it to drag. All you can do is replace the clock, and most of the replacement clocks these days are digital. So if it's still available they may have come out with a kit that basically you change the components and you put in a [digital display type clock](#). I would recommend having a technician do it because it comes with a bunch of wires and instructions and brackets.

SUE

It's complicated.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally. So if you take the [model number](#) off your oven, go to [RepairClinic.com](#), you can get an idea of what kind of clock you're going to get, but most of them have been changed over to the digital. You can order it, when it gets there, you can call your local repairman.

SUE

Now how does that affect my self-cleaning oven and my timer?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it's going to be slow as well and it could fail as well. As far as the replacement [clock](#) goes, they're all made to do the functions that your oven currently has, it's made for the self-clean.

SUE

Okay. And what is the ballpark on what that would cost?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most clocks run between one hundred and two hundred dollars.

SUE

And as I said the unit's over twenty years old and I really don't want to replace it because I'm not planning on staying here much longer...

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a [built-in double oven](#)?

SUE

Yes, sir.

JOHN SOWDEN

To replace it would not be a cheap endeavor.

SUE

No, I know that.

JOHN SOWDEN

And then, a lot of times there's cabinet work involved, and all that good stuff.

SUE

But once they start fooling around with that, doesn't that often set off something else when it's old?

JOHN SOWDEN

Not really. There are other things that can go wrong given the age of the unit, but something like that, the double ovens, there's not a lot of wear and tear and [surface burner](#) use type stuff, so they normally hold up pretty well. And as you stated, if you plan on moving then I would spend money more towards replacing the clock versus the whole unit, because a double oven is thousands of dollars these days.

SUE

Okay. Well thank you very much.

2002 Frigidaire Electric Double Oven: Top Oven with Temperature Problems

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a problem with a Frigidaire double oven, again, John, in Oxford, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, John.

JOHN

I've got a [Frigidaire double oven](#); it's about five years old, and the top oven will only heat up to about 350 degrees.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. Is this electric?

JOHN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And the bottom oven works fine?

JOHN

Yes, it does.

JOHN SOWDEN

Does this have digital controls on it, or the good old [knobs](#) with the [thermostat](#) you turn to set it at 350 degrees?

JOHN
No, it's digital.

JOHN SOWDEN
Okay. Well, and normally the upper oven is the one that gets used the most.

JOHN
That's correct.

JOHN SOWDEN
Right, well, if you're having [temperature problems](#), that is normally either in the [oven sensor](#) or the [circuit board](#) itself. But the first thing you want to do is make sure that both elements are in fact glowing red, so set it to bake and make sure the element's glowing red and then set it to broil and make sure that's glowing, because that will rule out the [bake and broil elements](#). During preheat, the oven will use both bake and broil elements to get the oven up to temperature, then it will cycle on the lower oven, or the bake element, which is on the floor of the oven cavity. So I would start with making sure that both of those are working, that you can get power to them. After that, I would lean more towards the oven sensor. It's something that you can check with an [ohmmeter](#). As I stated earlier in the show, most of those run between one thousand and eleven hundred ohms at room temperature. If those are within tolerance, then I would lean more towards the [circuit board](#) is not sensing the signal from the sensor properly.

JOHN
Yeah, because the bottom element [doesn't heat up](#) red when you're trying to heat it up. So I bought a new element, or whatever you call that, and put that in and that didn't make any difference. Broiler does work, and it will heat right up to glowing red.

JOHN SOWDEN
Okay, but you're not getting any power to the [bake element](#) then?

JOHN
That's correct.

JOHN SOWDEN
Okay. And the broil does work?

JOHN
Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right, at this point I would lean more towards the [circuit board](#), because there are a set of relays on that board that feed power to the bake element, and it's possible that the contacts in it are bad.

JOHN

Is that something that you have to take the whole unit out of the wall to get to?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most of the time, you can do that without having to pull it out all the way, most you can just remove the upper [control panel](#). At times, you have to slide it out a foot or so and remove the top over plate which covers the first third of the cabinet, but you shouldn't have to pull it all the way out. Now the other thing, were both the wires going to the [bake element](#) in pretty good shape when you pulled it out?

JOHN

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, good, because at times—

JOHN

No corrosion, no nothing, like factory new almost.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, sometimes you have a burnt wire at the back of that and then you do have to pull it out completely to get at that and rewire it. Most of the stuff as far as changing the board you can do from the front and not have to wrestle it out of there.

JOHN

Okay, it's something you think I should do or you think I should call somebody and have them do it?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a question only you can answer as far as that goes, but I can tell you given the time frame and the holidays coming up with how busy the service companies are right now, if you decide to have somebody come out and do it I would act on it pretty quick. As far as parts and stuff go, you can go to our website and we can have it to your door as quickly as you want it depending on which shipping selection you chose.

JOHN

Okay. I appreciate the help. You guys have a great Christmas!

Gas Dryer Being Replaced and Listener Wants To Know How to Shut Off the Gas

JOHN MCCULLOCH

To Dorothy, in Taylor, with a [dryer](#) question on the Appliance Repair Show.

DOROTHY

Yes, I'm going to replace my [gas dryer](#). I'm going to have a serviceman connect the new one, but how do I disconnect the old one? My husband said I have to go into the main where the meter is, but there are no [knobs](#) there to turn the gas off. I do see a little red knob that feeds into the hot water tank. How do you shut the gas off?

JOHN SOWDEN

Here's the thing. Every home is different; every home is plumbed different, water and gas. So this is a situation where I would have to be there to tell you where the shutoff is. Normally, there's a shutoff within three or four feet of the line on the appliance. That's normally the code that you have to have the shutoff pretty close to the appliance so that if something was to happen you could readily turn it off. But that's not always the case, it depends on age of the home and who was the last person to work on it. But if somebody's coming to hook up the new one, depending on where you buy it, if they take away the old one that's something where they disconnect the old one and hook up the new one.

DOROTHY

I know, I went to service people to take the old one away but I have to disconnect the gas first.

JOHN SOWDEN

Somebody's coming in to hook up the new one, correct?

DOROTHY

Right. But I can't have him coming at the exact same time as the appliance people are coming.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well you know you might be able to have them come out and just stop by and disconnect it and when they deliver the new one, come back and hook it up.

DOROTHY

This house is almost fifty years old and they do not have a shutoff anywhere near the [dryer](#). I guess years ago that wasn't code. I followed the gas line and it's going right over to the hot water tank and it feeds into the main big pipe, the gas pipe, and then that feeds off into the hot water tank and I do see a little red valve that you could shut off the gas there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, that's just for the tank itself. This would be a very good time to have somebody come out and get it up to par and put a shutoff in near the dryer. That's something that might be recommended even when somebody comes out to hook up the new one, to make sure you have a shutoff there.

DOROTHY

Yeah, because my husband said something about well, you have to go in where the meter is, and I don't---

JOHN SOWDEN

Which might very well be the case, but again it's something that, without being able to see it, I can only be of so much help on that one. But I would call out somebody who deals with gas lines and have them evaluate what you currently have, put it up to snuff and make sure it's where it should be as far as code and the shutoffs, so that whoever comes to put in the dryer can turn the gas off and hook it up and recheck it and it's going to probably not be cheap but it's certainly the safest way to go.

DOROTHY

Yeah, I have a heating and cooling man and he's really reasonable.

JOHN SOWDEN

Good, good I'd start there.

2000 Maytag Top Load Washing Machine Noisy, Leaking, and Smoking

JOHN MCCULLOCH

From Onondaga, here's Henry on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Henry, go ahead please.

HENRY

We have a [Maytag washer](#), it's about seven years old and it was [noisy](#) when it spun out and it also had more vibration. Well, the other day it just quit, and it started to smoke like the bearings was fed up and the [belt](#) was starting to go, and also [it has a leak](#) in it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, well let's start at the beginning. Is this a [top loader](#) or a [front loader](#)?

HENRY

It's a top loader.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you say it's roughly seven years old? Is it one or two belts?

HENRY

I really don't know. What I was wondering, do you think we're going to run in to so much cost to have it fixed, like by Maytag, maybe we'd be better off just getting a new one.

JOHN SOWDEN

Depends on what's wrong, but the [water leak](#), generally what happens is the tub seal fails and it leaks water into the main bearing, and then you have the fact that metal and water don't mix too well scenario happening, and eventually it seizes the [bearing](#). To have someone come out and fix that you're probably looking at a two hundred dollar repair bill, depending on how easy it is to get a part and what they have to take a hammer to, in order to get at it, because again when the water starts leaking in there things rust up. So, you're probably at half the cost of the new one. Depending on the model you can usually remove the front panel, there are a few screws at the base of the front panel and you can pop that off and grab a flashlight and do a general inspection to see if you can see where it's been leaking for quite some time. With the [motor](#), the smoking and sound could just be a set of [belts](#), or it could be the motor has failed. Another thing to consider is, if you have something caught between the tubs, if you're missing any socks or smaller garments they can sometimes flip over and get caught between the tubs and sometimes that will lock up the unit, but the noise from what you're describing is normally from a bearing, and long-term as far as buy new, I'd say if it is the [bearing and seal assembly](#) you're at least at half the cost of a new one.

HENRY

At half the cost of a new one? And you think two hundred dollars would fix the leak and the bearing both?

JOHN SOWDEN

Again, it depends on the unit, and the other thing is where the washer is at. People come out to service your appliance, if it's built into a closet and you have to take the closet doors off and drag it across inch thick shag carpeting, that's never happened to me, to get it out, then obviously the cost goes up because its labor intensive and you pay for the time. Most places have a flat rate of what it will cost, so you might want to call around and see what they quote you, but until you get there sometimes you don't really know. But yeah, just generally speaking from what you're describing and what I suspect, you're probably at half the cost of a new machine.

HENRY

Okay. All right, well thank you very much.

1995 Kenmore Portable Ultra Wash 3 Dishwasher Not Pumping Water

JOHN MCCULLOCH

With a question on a [Kenmore](#) portable dishwasher, Steve in Redford, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Steve.

STEVE

I have a twelve-year-old Sears Kenmore Ultra Wash 3, it's a portable dishwasher, and it runs but it just [won't pump water](#) anymore.

JOHN SOWDEN

It doesn't pump water out or it doesn't circulate water?

STEVE

[Water isn't going into it](#). It's the portable kind, the kind you have to hook up to a sink.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you hook it up to the sink...

STEVE

Turn the water on and push the start cycle and you can hear the thing running and going through the cycles but it just got to the point where I think some water was coming in, and now it's getting no water at all.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, well, the easy way to see if the [pump](#) is circulating the water and it's going to drain is to just take a couple pitchers of water in there and plug it in and see if you hear the swish-swish sound and if the water drains out, that's how you can see if the pump is actually able to circulate the water. If you're having any incoming water supply problems, it's normally the [water inlet valve](#) has failed, or there's a [float switch](#) that's attached to a float assembly, and over time what happens is the soap buildup, the soap scum for lack of better words, holds that float up so it doesn't actuate the float switch and then therefore send power to the valve. So if you remove the lower [kick panel](#) on that you'll see what looks like a dome, normally in the front of the unit, that's the float, and you can just lift up on that and if you hear a "click, click" sound that's telling you that the switch is being actuated. If you do that and it starts to work then you know that the float assembly's just gummed up and you can disassemble it and clean it out. If not, then I'd say you have an electrical problem which is either the switch has failed or the [water inlet valve](#) has failed.

STEVE

Well if I put the water into it and it pumps it out, what does that mean then?

JOHN SOWDEN

That means that your [pump assembly](#) is working.

STEVE

Does that mean that there's a [problem with the water getting into it](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's exactly right, process of elimination.

STEVE

Right, so that's the first thing I should try?

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, otherwise before you put any money into the thing—

STEVE

I'm wondering if it's even worth—it's twelve years old and I think I paid two or three hundred dollars for it back then, and I'm wondering if it would be worth having someone, because I'm not mechanical.

JOHN SOWDEN

I can tell you that a new portable...portables are more expensive than [built in dishwashers](#).

STEVE

Yeah, I had a room in the kitchen that was the only place it could go.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, and when you go to replace the portable, they're normally one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars more than a regular dishwasher because you've got that big steel wrapper and the nice cutting board on top and the [casters](#) and the wheels in the base, all that costs money to produce. So generally a portable unit's going to run, as I say, at least another hundred dollars over, so that's one thing to consider as far as repairing it, because when you go to replace it, it's not going to be a cheap endeavor. On the flip side, you don't have to pay for installation, you just roll it off the back of the truck and into the kitchen and away you go. But as far as that goes if it needs a [water valve](#), that's a fairly straightforward do-it-yourselfer project to get your feet wet on if you wanted to tackle it, it's not a lot of expense in parts and you're not out too much money if it doesn't work out for you.

STEVE

Okay, well I'll try that then.

JOHN SOWDEN

We've got a lot of instructional help on our website.

STEVE

So go to your [website](#) and...

JOHN SOWDEN

And you can learn about [how dishwashers work](#), where the components are located, what they're called, if you have specific questions you can log in and ask us a specific question, give us your email address and ask your question and we'll try to get back to you as soon as we can and give you hopefully a good answer.

STEVE

Okay. Sounds good. Thank you very much for the information.

1957 Kelvinator Electric Range Surface Burners are No Long Working

JOHN MCCULLOCH

I think we have time to squeeze this one in from, Sherry in Dearborn Heights, before we come to the end of the show. Go ahead, Sherry, we've got to be fast.

JOHN SOWDEN

It sounds like you're having problems with a range, what problems are you having?

SHERRY

Okay, this is a range that...oh it's got to be over fifty years old. It's a [Kelvinator](#) brand.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes!

SHERRY

And some of the [burners](#) aren't working.

JOHN SOWDEN

Gas or electric?

SHERRY

Electric. And I'd like to know if there's someone that we could call to come out and look at it and repair it or...

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, I can tell you—

SHERRY

They don't carry parts for it if it's that old?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most parts are probably discontinued. There are a lot of universal parts that if you have somebody who is pretty good on ranges, so if you need a new [switch](#) they can probably find something that will work for you, depending on the unit. Most often, for a unit of this age, that is starting to lose [burners](#), the problem is wiring, the wires get brittle, they break off, you repair it and they break off somewhere else, so it could need a complete re-wire. The cost of that, to have somebody come out and do that versus the stove itself, it might not be worth it. When the unit's this old the wiring gets very brittle, and the problem you run into there is if you keep using it, at times the wires can break and then touch the frame, which means that now you've got a stove that's electrically charged and when you touch it and the ground, you get a free hairdo.

SHERRY

Oh my goodness!

JOHN SOWDEN

So I would recommend if the wiring looks really bad on it, I wouldn't go any farther unless you want to have somebody come in and rewire it, which could be a few hundred dollars. It depends on how much sentimental value—

SHERRY

Do you know anybody that I could call that would do that?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would go through the phone book and see who [handles](#) stuff like that. Some people will take it on and others won't, it really depends on the service company.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thanks for the call, Sherry, and good luck with your [Kelvinator range](#). That's all the time we have.