

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—December 30, 2007

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Whirlpool Electric Dryer Taking Too Long To Dry

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll start things out with George in Cleveland with a question on a dryer on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi George, go ahead.

GEORGE

We've got a [Whirlpool electric dryer](#). It doesn't seem to be getting real hot inside and it [takes two cycles to dry a load](#), a big load of towels. Now, we've got a twenty-five foot line; exhaust line, with two bends. However, it does have a booster in it. The vent holes in the back of the drum are clean. The filter, I can put water through it, it doesn't hold water so that's clean. And I felt on the outside, I felt the air coming out and it seems to be coming out forcefully. But yet, compared to what a thirty-year-old Whirlpool that I stuck my hand in, it doesn't seem to be as hot as it should be. I don't know.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, it's taking two loads, but you do feel heat, you are getting some heat?

GEORGE

Yeah, I feel the heat, it's just not at the point where you would burn your skin or it would feel real hot.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Now, you say you have twenty-five feet of [venting](#) with two bends? Is that flexible venting or is that the rigid straight wall...?

GEORGE

It's rigid.

JOHN SOWDEN

And have you disassembled and cleaned that.

GEORGE

I have not. I wanted to talk to you before I did anything.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, from what you're describing, if it's heating normally (unless the [element](#) is touching the frame or something kind of weird is going on where you're only getting part of the element to fire up) the problem is airflow, which is the most common problem that causes [long dry times](#). And normally they suggest, as far as dryer vents go, that you have a maximum of fifty feet and for every elbow, subtract eight to ten feet. Also for your outside vent or damper, subtract another eight feet. So you are at the maximum in length, even though it might not look that long. So I would start by cleaning it out. Now you said you have a booster fan in the line. Is that coming on?

GEORGE

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. I would start with a thorough cleaning of that and the booster fan because a lot of times that's where you'll get the restriction. And it doesn't take a whole lot of restriction over that long run to reduce the heat. The easy thing to do is, disconnect the dryer, run one load—and I'm not advocating using your [dryer](#) in the home without your vent hooked up, especially gas dryers—but for a test case scenario, the quick thing is just disconnect the vent from the back of the dryer, throw your clothes in for about an hour or what you normally would do. If it dries properly, then you know the problem is in your vent and what it's hooked up to.

GEORGE

Uh-huh.

JOHN SOWDEN

So that will give you an idea of whether you need to tear everything apart. If it is still [taking a long time to dry](#), then I would make sure that the blower housing in the dryer is clear, where the [blower wheel](#) and everything is at. You have to disassemble it and get in there and vacuum it out. Or, it's possible that the [element](#) itself could be broken, and then touching the frame of the housing. And what happens is it'll give some heat because you

have a complete path of electricity through the element to ground, which is not normally a good thing, and that's kind of a rare scenario versus the plugged vent. The plugged vent is most often what's found to be the problem.

GEORGE

So I should put a [multi-tester](#) on either end of the element, just to make sure?

JOHN SOWDEN

And check it to ground, correct. But the first thing I'd do is, disconnect the vent, throw in your wet towels or whatever, and set it for your normal setting. If they come out dry then you know the problem is in the venting.

GEORGE

Ok. Very good. Thank you.

Autoflow Humidifier, Model 250, No Water Getting Into the Reservoir

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's Heidi in Fenton with a furnace humidifier question on the Appliance Repair Show.

HEIDI

I have an [Autoflow 250 humidifier](#), whole house humidifier. And there's [no water getting into the reservoir](#). When we checked it with the voltmeter, there's no power getting to the valve.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Yours shows to have a twenty-four volt valve, so it doesn't run on household current. Normally, there's a transformer in that circuit, and it transforms the hundred and twenty volt standard household plug current down to twenty-four volts. Then it goes through your [humidistat](#), which is normally mounted in the furnace plenum assembly or in the ductwork. And then from there it sends power to your [solenoid valve](#). What happens is when the furnace is running, and it's calling for humidification through the humidistat, you'll get the twenty four volts to the valve and it will allow a small amount of water to trickle through the honeycomb [filter](#) that you have in there. So I guess the reason I went through all that explanation is, what are you checking for when you said you had no power, because according to what I see for your model, that's a twenty four volt system, so if you're looking for one hundred and twenty volts at that valve, you're not going to have it.

HEIDI

Right. My husband actually checked it with the [voltmeter](#), so I'm not really sure. I know he checked it going to the valve itself, the solenoid.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if you turn the humidistat up and you don't hear a little "click", which is the solenoid normally operating, then it could be a failed solenoid, which you can check with an ohmmeter and see if that coil is open. If not then it could be in the [humidistat](#) itself, it's not switching properly. Or, you could have a transformer that has failed. But the only way to diagnose this one is to get the meter out, and then start looking for the proper voltages in the circuit. It's a pretty straightforward system, but if you're looking for like you would where you plug your toaster in the wall, for one hundred and ten volts, you're not going to have it. So on this one, there are really three components it could be, which is the humidistat, the transformer, or the [solenoid valve](#). If all that's working properly, it could be just the solenoid valve itself is restricted. They have a very small hole that the water has to travel through; it's a small orifice they put in there to reduce the water flow to just a trickle, and it doesn't take much water sediment to plug those up.

HEIDI

Ok, because we are on a well.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that will do it.

HEIDI

We have a water softener. So it could just be plugged.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be, and you can take that off and soak the valve body in vinegar, try to get rid of that. You don't want to enlarge the hole for the orifice. On a lot of these you can replace the screen and orifice in the valve, but a lot of times just cleaning it up, letting it soak in something that gets rid of the scales will get it back in operation for you.

HEIDI

Ok, because the one thing I did was actually a little bit of research, I went online to your website, and also to the [Autoflow](#) website, and it didn't look like there were that many parts available for purchase on this thing.

JOHN SOWDEN

Some of them, as time goes on, they do discontinue some of them. But we show to have the [valve](#) and the [pad](#) for it in stock, so if it's a valve, you can get that. If it's a humidistat, you can use something from a different brand that's comparable, as long as it will mount in there. All they do is turn on and off according to humidity, so you could always get something in another manufacturer or after-market to work. And same thing with the transformers; as long as you still have the proper VA rating for the [transformer](#), you can use a lot of different things to work for you.

HEIDI

Ok. So once we figure out what it is, if I call you guys you can help me with the right part.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, we should be able to find something in that line, or you can look at a different manufacturer and find something comparable. You might have to make some modifications as far as mounting and stuff goes, but really it's just a step-down transformer and a [humidistat](#) that you're looking at, and there are a lot of manufacturers that make those out there and they should work fine for your application. It's just a matter of adapting them.

HEIDI

Ok. Yeah, we're creative, so I'm sure we can adapt it.

1993 Frigidaire Electric Oven with Failed Baking and Surface Element

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's a question on a [Frigidaire oven](#) from Steve in Redford, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Steve. Go ahead please.

STEVE

I'm calling about a Frigidaire stove. A few months ago I had to replace, actually I got, and I guess you would call it the [element on the top](#) that you put pots on?

JOHN MCCULLOCH

You mean the surface unit?

STEVE

Yeah, the surface unit. Anyway, I bought the part. They just plug in and out, real simple. Then the other night I was cooking dinner and I noticed that the [oven wasn't heating up](#) like it should. It never really did get hot enough, but then the next day after it cooled off I went and looked at it and the element--I guess you call it the baking one--the one on the bottom?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, did it have holes in it?

STEVE

Actually, it was the like the burner was all bumpy and when I picked it up it just broke.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, what happens is—

STEVE

It wore out?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it has failed. What the elements basically consist of is an inner piece of wire and then a ceramic shell and then the outer steel shell. And what happens is, when they fail,

at times the inner resistant wire will break and burn through the ceramic and then it hits the outer steel shell and then it turns into a welding rod, so sometimes—

STEVE

Yeah, and then the weirdest thing was, and I don't know if it was totally coincidental, but like twenty minutes later one of the burners went, on the top and it looked like the fourth of July, you know arcing like the same thing.

JOHN SOWDEN

The problem you run into when that happens, the reason that happens is because the outer shell and inner shell are now one, you have a direct short, and you're shorting that current path to ground.

STEVE

It kind of scared me. So I have to replace one of these smaller elements and the [baking element](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

The bake element definitely sounds like its shot. The problem you may run into is when that occurs you short something like that to ground, it could also have compromised the contacts in the [oven thermostat](#). So if you put a new element in and it doesn't matter where you set the oven, it just goes and goes, then you've probably welded the contacts closed in to the thermostat. Or, if it doesn't turn on at all, you've burned them and they're open. So you might have more parts required. As far as the [surface burner](#) goes, normally the circuits are in different configuration to where, whatever happens in the oven is not going to affect the surface unit. I think you just have two scenarios that happened at the same time rather than related.

STEVE

Well, I already had one of the other burners go a couple of months ago in the same way. I've never had this happen with a stove before, I don't know, is this common?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, it's common. When they fail it's not—

STEVE

Well, the [stove](#) is like fifteen years old and it's had a lot of use.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. And the elements, what will happen is the [surface burner](#) is the same thing, if it's shorted out, like you said with the fourth of July stuff, it sounds like that's what—

STEVE

Yeah, it was like a fountain of sparks!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, and it's quite possible that again, that's a sign that the circuit is grounded. You might have also damaged the [switch](#) as well. I'm assuming the one that failed is the one you use the most?

STEVE

No, what I did that is I switched to one of the other burners, into that, the one that failed, and that worked fine.

JOHN SOWDEN

Good, that means the switch is fine. So you should be able to get away with a new burner, and hopefully put a new [oven element](#) in.

STEVE

Like I was on your website and it called the oven element a plug-in, but it looks like it's connected by two screws at the back of the oven?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. The first thing you do is turn off the power. There's normally two screws that retain the [bake element](#) to the back wall; you can then slide it out, and if all the stars are aligned properly there should be three or four inches of wiring that you can slide it out, and then the wires either push on to the back of the element, or there's a screw that goes through them and you can detach the wires going to the old element and then put them on the new one. It doesn't matter which wire goes where; there's normally only two, and if you reverse them it's no big deal.

STEVE

So basically just unscrew and it plugs in and out?

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

STEVE

It looks a little more complicated than the burners.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, because the [burners](#) just plug in, that's a pretty straightforward deal there. But a bake element is normally pretty easy to change.

STEVE

But it's in the back of the oven!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you do need to get in there, and the other problem you run into is—

STEVE

Finding the right wrench or whatever, because I'm not real mechanical.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. It depends, either use a Philips screw or a quarter-inch nut or—

STEVE

You mean like a socket or something?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, it's normally a quarter-inch, and you can buy a quarter-inch nut driver, or we sell a [multi-purpose tool](#) for I think eight or ten bucks. It comes with a couple five-sixteenths, a quarter-inch drive, and it's a nice thing to have for that job but it's also a nice thing to keep in the glove box.

STEVE

That does sound good.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, so you can get that as well. And that's all you really need. You can use a socket if you've got a [socket set](#), but normally a quarter inch nut driver or a [multi-tool screwdriver](#) will work well. And at times they're rusted in there so you have to refine them a little bit, and it's been fifteen years so that's a lot of heat.

STEVE

Yeah, and I had one more question. The element on the top, I was looking on your website and like I said I bought the large one. There are two size elements, the eight inch and the six inch. And I bought the eight inch [element](#), a couple months ago from your website, and it worked great, no problem. I just wondered why, the smaller element, which is the exact same thing as the big one, but it's twice the price?

JOHN SOWDEN

I don't know I'll have to look and see.

STEVE

I don't know, nobody can tell me, because I called your number and I looked at other websites, and it's the exact same thing. I don't get that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, there's a difference between the small and the large element as far as size, and it really depends on what channels they go through. If that same element is used on a lot of different models, then obviously as the supply and demand goes, then so does the price.

STEVE

Well would it matter if I just replaced, I'm replacing a small one, with another bigger one?

JOHN SOWDEN

You can't physically do that.

STEVE

Oh, it wouldn't plug into it?

JOHN SOWDEN

It would, but the hole in the top of your stove would not accommodate it.

STEVE

Oh, that's right, what am I thinking? You're right.

JOHN SOWDEN

You could get a solo and give it a try, but---

STEVE

No, you're right, there's no way it would physically work. I just couldn't understand why it was twice as much.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Well the other thing you could do is, as long as it's the same wattage—

STEVE

Well, one was like twenty dollars and the other was forty.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you find one that is comparable in wattage and size, it's a six-inch burner, it has the same amount of turns or wraps, and you want to make sure it has the same wattage so it interacts with the switch properly. There are different burners you could put in there that would work all right. It just depends on cosmetics, if you want it to look the same as the other ones.

STEVE

Right.

2006 Electric Range Cleaning Question

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on an [electric range](#) that can't get clean, here's John in Clinton Township, on the Appliance Repair Show.

JOHN

Yup, electric range, the surface is white around the burners, we use a soft cloth but it never gets off all the dirt, no matter what we do.

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a [smooth top unit](#)?

JOHN
Sure.

JOHN SOWDEN
I was trying to figure out what you were working on here. You have a buildup on the top itself?

JOHN
Surrounding the white surface, is that enamel or whatever?

JOHN SOWDEN
On the glass itself, around the [burner rings](#), around the edges of each burner? You have a buildup of debris?

JOHN
Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok. Well, you said you've tried—have you tried [cook top cleaner](#) on that?

JOHN
No.

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok. How old is your stove?

JOHN
Two years.

JOHN SOWDEN
And did it come with cook top cleaner?

JOHN
I don't know.

JOHN SOWDEN
Oh. Well, you can use a cook top cleaner for that, if this is a smooth top or a glass top. That normally works pretty well. If the stains are kind of burned in, then you need to use a [razor blade scraper](#), gently, and with a little bit of time and effort you can scrape those right back down to the glass. The reason I ask how old it is, is most of the glass tops come with a nice little sample of [cook top cleaner](#) as well as a razor blade, and a lot of times they will tuck those in the broiler drawer.

JOHN

Ok. You're referring to this as a smooth top. I guess I'm wrong. Just as the previous person talked about the burners, you can remove and replace.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, so it's a conventional [coil element](#). All right.

JOHN

Sure, sure.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now you say that the burners themselves—

JOHN

No, it's the white enamel or whatever, the metal part.

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, ok, the [main top](#) itself is stained?

JOHN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it's white.

JOHN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. You can try a whole host of cleaners. If it's something that's baked on or discolored, it's probably not going to come off.

JOHN

Oh!

JOHN SOWDEN

You can try some Soft Scrub and let it sit on there a little while, and gently work on it. But if it's something that's from, let's say a lot of people that do canning and things and they get great big pots on there, it gets really hot, and it actually discolors the enamel and paint. There's not much you can do other than put a [main top](#) on, if it's white.

JOHN

Oh.

JOHN SOWDEN

But I would try some of the [cleaners](#). You don't want to use something too abrasive on it, but something like Soft Scrub, something like that, if you are gentle with it, try it a couple times, you might be able to get it where it's not as noticeable. But other than that, I wouldn't recommend steel wool or anything. That might get it off, but then you compromise the porcelain or the paint and then you start getting rust and other situations. White is a hard color to keep clean, and if you do a lot of wok cooking or big pot cooking, to get some discoloration around the main top like that is not abnormal. And sometimes all you can do, if you want it to cosmetically look pristine again, and you have to replace the main top, which is normally about a hundred bucks.

JOHN

On a [refrigerator](#), how often should you clean off the coil that gathers dust?

JOHN SOWDEN

Twice a year. Do it during your spring-cleaning, and then at the end of the summer as well. If you have cats and dogs or any other pets that shed or something of that nature, you might even want to do it more often. But normally, twice a year is what we recommend. Get in there with a vacuum cleaner and a [condenser brush](#) and clean those up. It will not only make the machine run more efficiently, save you some money, but also reduce future repair bills from it laboring to keep your food cold.

JOHN

Thanks.

GE Microwave Lights Dimming Causing Static in the Radio

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's a question on a microwave from Bob in New Lathrup, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Bob.

BOB

Good morning. The problem I have with my [GE microwave](#) is it will work fine for about thirty to forty seconds and then it will look like it labors and the lights go dim, and I get static on the radio and then it will start going good again. And then it will do it again and again.

JOHN SOWDEN

And is this, when you're setting it on the high setting, or defrost, or...

BOB

Doesn't matter how I set it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. The reason I ask is that normally in defrost, depending on the unit, all you're doing is you're turning on the [magnetron](#) half the time, so it goes on and off in places.

BOB

Yeah, I've done that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, I didn't know if it was related to that, or if it's all the time you have it set on high, it sounds like the mag tube is weak and overheating, and that's where you're getting all your interference is the mag tube itself. If it's cooking otherwise, it sounds like it's just heating up and probably cutting off on the [thermal cut out](#) on the mag tube. And then it jumps back in and runs for as long as it can and then cuts back out again.

BOB

Yeah, it labors.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. But everything else is working well as far as the fans and stuff—

BOB

Well, this morning I never had a problem with it. It ran good this morning!

JOHN SOWDEN

From what you're describing, if it's in operation for a little while, it sounds to me like the mag tube might be the problem on that one.

BOB

My lights flicker and my radio gets all this static.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you're drawing an excessive amount of current to keep things running there.

BOB

Ok. What should I do?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, I would say in a microwave, I normally don't recommend people jumping into a microwave themselves unless they're well versed in electrical circuits and/or experience in working on microwaves, because even unplugged, a microwave stores energy in the [high-voltage capacitor](#). And if you do not discharge it before working on it you can get a very nasty shock or worse. So normally my rule of thumb on [microwaves](#) is to have somebody come out and diagnose this for you. Or, if you want to save a few bucks but go through a lot more trouble, you can take it off the wall and a lot of places have a reduced rate to have a microwave brought into the shop, if you take it to them. So if you have somebody who can help you take it down, you can save a few dollars over a service call. Other than that, a mag tube, and that's what it sounds like is the problem; if that's the case you're looking at probably a hundred bucks just in parts. If you have a man come out to your home and perform this and they replace the mag tube, you're looking at between one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars.

BOB

I can put a brand new one in for that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, again if you can do it yourself, otherwise if you pay for installation on a new one, you can still add another fifty to one hundred dollars to the bill. That's another thing in replacing appliances; you have to also look at the replacement cost when doing the math on that.

BOB

Oh, for installing the new one, is that a plug in behind there?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, every installation is different; it depends on the builder or what the last person did. Most often there's a plug in the cabinet above that, and then there's a hole that goes down to the [microwave](#) and you feed the cord through the hole and plug it into the receptacle in the cabinet above. But I have seen all kinds of creative wiring configurations when it comes to that, where they wire it direct, it really depends on who was in there last time and how close to code they were when they installed it.

BOB

Ok. Sounds good.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sorry for the bad news!

BOB

Ok, thank you very much.

2004 Maytag Dishwasher, Model MDB7600AWB, Making Noises

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a Maytag dishwasher, Walter in Williamston, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Walter.

WALTER

My question is I have a model [MDB7600AWB Maytag dishwasher](#). It was installed in July of 2004. And every once in a while it makes a [groaning, moaning noise](#) like the motor bearing is going out on it. And it will do it periodically. It will do, maybe at the beginning of the cycle, or the middle the cycle, or towards the end. And it won't last for long, but it makes a noise like it wants to jump out of there, and we can't figure out what it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's a high-pitched bearing noise, is that it?

WALTER
Well...

JOHN SOWDEN
Does it do it when it's draining?

WALTER
No, it doesn't do it when it's draining. It does it when it's in the cycle. And it could be five minutes into the cycle, or a half an hour into the cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN
And, are you sure it's coming from the [motor](#), or is it when the unit is filling, because sometimes when it fills you get a high pitched whine as the water comes through the [water valve assembly](#) on some units. Does it last about ninety seconds and then quit?

WALTER
Yeah, it lasts sometimes for about ninety seconds, and then it quits.

JOHN SOWDEN
Yeah. It could be when the unit is filling, and a lot of times it depends on the water pressure in your home and everything else, but a lot of times when the machines are filling, you'll get a high pitched whine sometimes and that's actually water coming into the machine. If that's the case then it could be that the water valve is starting to get a little restricted. Or, it could be just your water pressure versus the valve, and there's not much you can do about it; if it's working properly I would just leave it alone.

WALTER
Well it's working properly, but my guess is it's not the water, my guess is it's the motor or bearing or something in there.

JOHN SOWDEN
If it's in the [motor assembly](#), the first thing I'd do is, after turning off the power to the unit, you can remove the lower panel on that. Normally there are a few screws that retain the lower panel, and look at the motor itself, and see if you see any [signs of a leak](#) or any water residue. If that's the case, then what's happened is the motor seal has failed, and you're getting a small amount of [water dripping](#) into the motor bearings. Over a period of time it will cause those to wear out, and if that's the case, you can replace just the motor, I believe, on that you're better just to get a new motor [pump assembly](#). Just plop the new one in and start over, rather than try to tear apart the whole pump and reseal all the seals and everything. You can do it, but the easier way is to just get the assembly. If that's not the case, or you don't see any signs of water leakage, you could still have some bad bearings in the motor, and again the only way to really determine that is to run it, you have the [lower panel](#) removed where you can kind of hear in the underside of the machine, and try to determine where it's coming from. So, the reason I mention the water is, when it comes to noises, I kind of have to hear it to understand what's going on.

WALTER
Oh, I see.

JOHN SOWDEN

Either situation can cause a noise intermittently; that's why I asked about the duration of the noise, because when you hear the motor running and you hear a squealing sound, a lot of people would immediately suspect the [motor assembly](#). But the [water valves](#) can make a high pitched whine sound that sounds at times like a motor bearing and it has nothing to do with the motor. All you can do at this point is kind of baby-sit it, remove the [lower panel](#) and grab a flashlight and shine it up in there where the motor goes into the housing, and see if there's white residue from the soap. If that's the case you have a bad motor seal, and again the new motor pump assembly is in order to keep it on track.

WALTER

Well, I'll look at that and try and see what happens, and I thank you.

1985 Kenmore Top Loading Washing Machine with Soap Suds in the Water

JOHN SOWDEN

I guess we'll look at Ron in Birmingham and see what his problems are with his washing machine next.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's do it! Ron, go ahead please.

RON

Good morning! I have an old [Kenmore washing machine top loader](#). And it washes fine, and cycle's fine, nothing wrong there. And even on second rinse, when everything is done its fine. But when you refill it with fresh water, it looks like it's full of soap suds.

JOHN SOWDEN

This is, you do one complete load, and then the next load still has suds in the water?

RON

Yeah, well it rinses all right and the water comes out fine, the clothes are washed fine and everything, but when it refills for another load it looks like its got soap suds on top.

JOHN SOWDEN

And this is always in the second load, though? You've already done one complete load of washing things fine, and now you're doing your second load and when you fill it up with out putting soap in there you're getting soap suds?

RON

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, well do you have a suds saver on this unit?

RON

Well, there was one, but it was disconnected a long time ago.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, that would tell me that...normally it's a failure in the suds saver that would also cause that, where you're [not draining](#) properly. I'd have to see how it's rerouted to make sure it was bypassed properly. And it could be that's fine and what you really have is just a lot of soap residue, this looks like it's a pretty old machine, like twenty or twenty five years old?

RON

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

You could just have a lot of soap residue, either underneath the [agitator](#), or along the top of the outer tank. As time goes on, you can get a soap scum in there that, again, when you put the clean water in, it just suds back up. One thing you can do is run a load of hot water, and that will help dissolve a lot of that, and what I would do is fill it to the highest level of just hot water, and let it agitate, and then while it's agitating, I would add another small, a gallon or two bucket of hot water, and what that's going to do is it's going to take that water level up a little bit higher than it would normally fill, and don't [overflow](#) the tub, but what that will do is allow that to act on the soap scum if that's what you have along the outer tub. Run a full load like that let it agitate with some hot water and see if that helps. The other thing you can do is remove the [agitator](#) and see if you have a soap buildup on the underside of that. But on older machines like that, especially if you don't use a lot of hot water wash, is to help dissolve the soap if you use warm or a lot of cold water washes. You can get a soap buildup in there, and that's going to foam up as soon as you put any kind of water in there.

RON

Well, I have filled it up, and normally she does super hot water all the time, in the washes, and the other thing I did is they told me to take a couple gallons of vinegar and hot water and let it sit overnight and then run it through. But it's still doing it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Well, at this point if you can't get it out that way, then the good old physical inspection is in order which means you need to probably remove the top cover of the outer tub, and then see if you can see the buildup, and sometimes you can get in there with a rag on a screwdriver to fit in the difference between the inner and outer tub, and remove it physically that way.

RON

So, it's just a buildup of soap, it's nothing wrong with the machine?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would say, yes, it's normally a buildup of soap. But with your bypass on your soap diverter, it depends on how it was bypassed. You could be holding suds in a [hose](#) somewhere that's also causing that. That's why I asked about the suds saver. But normally on a unit this old it's just soap scum accumulation along the top of the lid.

Listener Shares Advice on Cleaning a Stovetop

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to Frank in Washington Township with...oh, Frank has cleaned around his [burners](#) and been successful and wants to share his success, here on NewsTalk 760 WJR. Frank, thanks for waiting.

FRANK

One of the bad things about being off between the holidays is having a to-do list.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure is!

FRANK

Well, on my to-do list this year was to get all these kitchen appliances clean. Even through normal cleaning, there are these contaminants that build up and they don't come off. And white appliances in particular, they look great when they first go in but they start to look yellow over a period of time. So Soft Scrub, in my opinion, is the worst thing you can use because my wife was using that on our white sink, and it does put scratches in the porcelain.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that's why I explained that you need to be real gentle with that, because if it's really burned in or whatever, short of replacing the top, is all you can do is to get that off. You can try other things like Goop-Off and Fantastic and a lot of other [cleaners](#), but if it's burned in, that's kind of a last-case scenario before you spring for a new top.

FRANK

We didn't have anything that bad. Well, some of the burners had black stuff on them, but what I used, because I have an automotive background, I went to the parts store and bought McGuire's. McGuire's has this three-part system, and the first step is this cleaner, and it's safe for clear coat, it's not abrasive, but man, it really does clean. I started with the sink, the sink had a real yellow look to it, and just on the one side, on the other side that hardly gets used, I was able to compare both sides when I got done cleaning.

JOHN SOWDEN

Before and after.

FRANK

Before and after, yes. When I got done using this three-part system, I used the paint cleaner on it, with a terry cloth towel, an old towel, and had to do it about three or four times. And then I followed it up with the polish, which is step two, and step three is the wax and it seals in all those fine scratches and stuff and buffed it all out. The sink looked brand new. So then I used it on the [stove](#) and did the same thing. I took all the [burners](#) off and cleaned the enamel.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, you were busy this holiday season.

FRANK

I'm telling you this really works! It will cost you about twenty dollars: each of these bottles is about six or seven bucks.

JOHN SOWDEN

So it's automotive, you went the automotive route for the treatment of the [paint](#) they use on cars; you were able to be successful with using it on appliances.

FRANK

It took the black stuff off, I cleaned all the burners and then I cleaned all the porcelain and waxed it all.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We're getting questions now, Frank. Do you do away games?

FRANK

What? Oh, no! But the one thing I haven't been able to tackle yet is on one of our [GE Profile](#) appliances on our oven, the plastic that borders the oven door, and the plastic that's part of the [key pad](#), there's a vent for the oven exhaust, and it's turning that plastic yellow. It's actually looking kind of burnt. I'm wondering if I can clean that or if I'm just going to have to replace that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's where the oven vent is, and just over time, that gets discolored and you can try a lot of different [cleaners](#) and you can get some results, but again a lot of times just replacing that is all you can do. And there's nothing to stop it moving forward because that's where the oven vent is, so especially after self-clean and things of that nature where you get a higher oven temperature. That's just kind of the nature of the beast.

FRANK

But if you have white appliances, this is the way to go. I'm telling you, they look beautiful! They look brand new!

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's good to know. We have a lot of different cleaners that the appliance manufacturers come out with, and they all do a pretty good job. The thing is, if you get something that's really baked on or just discolored because of the heat, there's not much you can do with that. That's why I said I hate to recommend abrasives, but at times that's about the only recourse you have, and again you want to go real gentle to get that off. But yeah, that's interesting that you went the automotive route, and it worked well for you.

2004 GE Dishwasher Making Noises in the Wash Cycle

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go now to Dan in Brownstown for a question on a dishwasher, another dishwasher that moans, here on the Appliance Repair Show.

DAN

Hi, this is Dan. We've got a [GE dishwasher](#) that was installed three years ago when the house was built. The model was supposed to be a quieter model, we paid extra for it, and it worked fine for about two years, and then last year it started moaning occasionally. It fills fine, the dishes wash fine, but apparently it starts moaning and it's just when it's kind of going through the cleaning cycle. When we run a citrus type [cleaner](#) through it, it may reduce the moaning a little bit, but quickly it comes back.

JOHN SOWDEN

And this is normally not when it's draining but when it's in the wash cycle?

DAN

Correct, it is while it's in the wash cycle. There's no noises when it's draining, no noises when it's filling; it's just when it's in the wash cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Because they use a separate [pump](#) for the drain, that's why I ask. The main wash pump is something that you could have a worn bearing. We had a discussion about this in the first hour to some degree, but I would again remove the lower panel and have a look, see if you see any [water dripping](#) down there.

DAN

There is no water, we've got hardwood floors, and so I would definitely be able to tell even after the fact.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's...I still would look because, and you're right, people with hardwood floors find out the very hard way that their dishwasher's been leaking, but it normally takes a period of time for it to warp and buckle your floor out into the room where you can see it. But I'd also recommend, there's a plate that you can put under your machine, that pushes the water to the front of the dishwasher to help you notice that quicker, and those are something that if you have wood floors you might want to look at something like that for a warning before it happens. So I'd look just to make sure. If not I'd suspect that, again it

could be in the motor pump assembly, and there could be something caught in the [motor pump assembly](#), food debris—

DAN

I pulled back the screen but I couldn't find anything in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, right. If the [cleaner](#) helps, again I'd try running it empty, even twice with the cleaner. If you've got something caught in the filter that's causing a water restriction that's causing it to have a hard time pushing the water up through the [wash arms](#) that could be where you're getting your moaning. If not then you can disassemble the [pump assembly](#) and clean those out, which is kind of a pain if you can do it with some cleaner without messing with it. Or again, it could be just a bearing sound in the motor.

DAN

I've worked with motors in the past, and it does not sound anything like motors.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's not a high whine, then it's from the water flow, basically. The other thing to inspect is the wash arms. Make sure that they're clear, that all the little holes in the wash arms are clean and that the wash arms are not split or that the water isn't shooting out the side. The jets in the [wash arm](#) are used to move the wash arm itself, so if you've got a kernel of corn or something like that plugging one of the holes, you can get the thing to sit and not move properly. The other thing is just look at the wash arm itself: a lot of them have plastic-to-plastic mating surfaces and those could be worn and causing the kind of groaning sound that you describe.

DAN

I see, and the only way to resolve—

JOHN SOWDEN

Replace the wash arms. A low water fill, just not enough water to push those arms around, so when you hear it doing it you might want to open the machine, add a pitcher or two of hot water and see if that helps.

DAN

Ok.

JOHN SOWDEN

And if that's the case then you might have a [water valve](#) that's restricted. Are you on a well?

DAN

No we're not. It's city water.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Normally well water has a shorter life span for water valves than city water, although some city water can be pretty hard. But I would try all those things, and again it's just a matter of figuring out where it's coming from, when it's coming; if it's duplicating it every time, for example it always does it in the main wash cycle and you discover you're getting a low fill, something like that.

DAN

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be just that the wearing parts, the [wash arms](#) themselves, are either gummed up with food debris, the filter system could be clogged, and again the water's not being routed properly. If it's not a [high pitched bearing noise](#) then it's something in the water distribution. And at times, all you can do is tear the thing apart and clean it out.

DAN

Ok, great. Thank you very much, I appreciate your help and I appreciate the show.

2007 Frigidaire Front Loading Washing Machine Shaking Violently

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here comes a question on a [washer](#) that shakes a lot from Fab in Milford, on the Appliance Repair Show.

FAB

Hello! Is this the appliance repair guy?

JOHN SOWDEN

This is the Appliance Repair Show. What question can I answer for you today?

FAB

I have a [Frigidaire front-loading washing machine](#) that has been shaking violently from the beginning.

JOHN SOWDEN

From the beginning of?

FAB

From when we got it at first.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how old is it?

FAB

It's brand new, about a couple of months old.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's a couple of months old, and it's been shaking since you've had it delivered?

FAB

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Do you have this on first floor laundry?

FAB

Pardon me?

JOHN SOWDEN

Do you have this in the basement, or is this a first floor laundry?

FAB

It's in the basement and it has a firm base.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

FAB

And my husband has tried to balance the little legs and everything but it doesn't seem to work.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the first thing I would recommend is make sure the unit is level, make sure the [leveling legs](#) are screwed in up inside the machine as far as you can get them and still make the unit level, which reduces the center of gravity. If that is still the case and the unit is shaking and you're sure that it's not a leveling problem and it's not a floor problem, meaning that your basement floor is really uneven and there's no way to level it, being two weeks old, I would recommend calling the manufacturer and have them come out and assess if there's something wrong, if it's got a broken [shock](#) or something on it possibly. But I'd do all you can first to make sure that the machine is level to the floor, you might even try it in a different spot if your floor is pretty uneven there. If you're pretty sure that it isn't a problem with the installation, that's what warranties are for. And I would call the manufacturer and have them send out somebody and see what they can determine.

FAB

Ok. I can see the shocks moving.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's normal. They are made to absorb the drum movement while you're spinning those clothes around and around 700 RPMs. But again, most often the problem is, it's on

a first floor laundry, or the unit's not leveled properly, especially in a brand new unit. The other thing is that, did you take out the shipping bolts?

FAB
Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok.

FAB
We took out the shipping bolts, yeah we did.

JOHN SOWDEN
Yeah, because that's the other thing, if people bring them home and don't take out the shipping bolts, they'll dance right across the floor. As a matter of fact there's one manufacturer that had one that they put upstairs and took the shipping bolts out and the thing literally walked across the bathroom floor right out the window. So do what you can as far as making sure you have it installed properly, and then from there, call the manufacturer, that's why you have a warranty.

2000 Kitchen Aid Dryer Making High Pitched Squeal

JOHN MCCULLOCH
And we'll go now for a question on a [GE dryer](#) from John in Clinton Township on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi John.

JOHN
Hi there. As it turns out it's not a GE, it's a [Kitchen Aid](#).

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok, you're close.

JOHN
I have a question about these bearings you've been getting all morning long, except this time it's on a dryer, no water involved.

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok.

JOHN
In fact, I just came downstairs and turned it on to see if it would make that noise when it had nothing in it at all, and it sounds a bit like a bearing, but it goes away after a bit. And I just don't know whether it's a bearing or whether it's dirty or what's in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

You have a [Kitchen Aid dryer](#)?

JOHN

Yes

JOHN SOWDEN

How old is it?

JOHN

It's less than ten years old, but I can't tell you for sure when.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it makes a [high-pitched squeal](#) when you first start it up?

JOHN

Yeah!

JOHN SOWDEN

Most of that's caused by the [idler pulley](#). That's the small spring-loaded pulley that puts tension on the belt, and then normally after it heats up a little bit that sound will go away. It could be coming from the motor bearings as well, but from what you describe the most common wearing part that causes that scenario is the [idler assembly](#). And if you replace that, you can replace the whole thing. They come as a rebuild kit for that unit: you can get both of the [rollers](#), the small tires for lack of better words that the drum rides on in the back, and those again could be causing the sound. And the idler pulley and the [belt](#), you can get the whole thing and kind of rebuild all the wearing parts for that unit for, I think, between twenty five and forty dollars for the whole kit.

JOHN

Ok, well I have the appliance repair service. I'm eighty years old so I don't do that kind of stuff anymore.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

JOHN

And I thought about calling them up, but I thought well, if it's just a cleaning job, I could just take the bottom off and look in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you could look in there. A lot of people will try to tear apart that [idler pulley](#) and lubricate it, but it's actually made to be a dry bearing, and by putting lots of lubricant in there, all you do is attract more of the lint and then it gets in there and it gums up.

JOHN

So it sticks right to it, then?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, exactly.

JOHN

Well, I think I'll get a hold of an appliance repairman and have them take a look at it, because it probably is just exactly what you said.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often for that vintage of unit, that's the most common failing thing would be the thing that has the most work to do, and that's the idler pulley on the [belt](#).

JOHN

Well, it works well— it dries, it heats up—so I'll give them a call and I appreciate it.

Amana Bottom Mount Refrigerator, Model BX21TW, Not Getting Cold in the Refrigerator Section

JOHN SOWDEN

We'll go to Adam in Warren who's got an [Amana refrigerator](#) question. We'll take another refrigerator question.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Ok. Adam?

ADAM

I'm right here, and I looked up the number of the refrigerator. It's a [BX21TW](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

All right, that's got the freezer on the bottom then, right?

ADAM

Right. And the freezer's working fine, but I'm getting [no cold air](#) up to the refrigerator. I suspect there must be a fan driving the cold air up to there, and it must have failed, the fan must have failed. Am I guessing correctly?

JOHN SOWDEN

What temperature do you have in your freezer? You say it's ok.

ADAM

In the freezer it's right around zero.

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, so it is cold!

ADAM

Yes, yes. But in the refrigerator the temperature is about fifty-two degrees. So there's some cooling, just coming through the insulation. But I suspect that there must be a fan there that drives the cold air up, and it's probably failed.

JOHN SOWDEN

There is a [freezer fan](#). Normally if you open the door and depress the switches for the light and the fan you can hear the fan run. If you don't, then I would say you either have a bad [door switch](#) or a fan motor, but most often you're not going to get zero degrees in the freezer if the fan is stalling or having problems. Most often the problem you have when you have one section cooling the way it's supposed to and the other one not, is either a [defrost system](#) failure starting to show up, where you're reducing your airflow, but then normally your freezer will conk out in a couple days. Or, most often you have a gate or an air diffuser in the refrigerator section that opens and closes to allow that cold air to be pushed in there, and that's probably stuck closed.

ADAM

All right. How do I get to it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well that's normally, on your unit, if you open up the refrigerator door you should see a small white plastic box, with a little vent on it, and the [air diffuser](#) is the component behind that. It's got a little thermostat on it, a sensing bulb, and all it does is open up a little gate. If you see that that is stuck closed, and until you can order a new one, you can take a small piece of cardboard or the like, and just wedge it in there until it's half-open. That will get you by until you can order a new control. All you're doing is forcing the door open that way.

ADAM

I see a box in the back. How do I get?

JOHN SOWDEN

There's a [knob](#), you have to take a knob off and there's normally a couple of clips that snap it to the back wall. You may have to depress them and then lift up and then you remove the cover and then the...

ADAM

How do I get the cover off? Because it looks like...

JOHN SOWDEN

You take the knob off.

ADAM

The knob looks like it's coming through the plate.

JOHN SOWDEN

It is. You pull on the [knob](#) and take it off. You may have a screw on one side or another that retains that, so you might have to take a shelf or two out of your fridge to get in there, because it's not much fun to get in there at times.

ADAM

It looks like there are some things that pop into the back wall, but I don't see any screws.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, if that's the case then they just have some tabs that you have to lift up and out and unsnap that from the back wall. And at times you'll break one of the tabs off and then you have to replace the cover, but I'd get there and have a look if you can. If you've got a small inspection mirror, look at the seam that goes along the back wall and see if you can find the tabs. They kind of pinch on the outside of that and try to lift up.

ADAM

But you basically work from the inside of the refrigerator compartment?

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, the [air damper](#) is the component behind that little cover. The other thing you can do is close the freezer door and then depress the switches in your refrigerator section, one to make sure that the lights are going on and off, and see if the [fan motor](#)—

ADAM

The [light switch](#) works. When I press on the light switch it turns off the light.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, but the reason I say to depress them is to make sure that the fan is running and see if you can feel any cold air coming out of that little vent. If not, and the fan is running in the freezer, then that little air damper is probably just stuck closed.

ADAM

Right now it sounds like the fan is running or something is running in the freezer. It seems to be running regularly.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you're just [starved for airflow](#) in your refrigerator section, and that damper assembly is most often the culprit because the only thing in the airflow is that little gate, and it's thermostatically operated.

ADAM

I have to try to do whatever I can to get that cover up. It looks like there's a tab on the right and the left and two tabs on the bottom.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, you have to kind of unsnap them, they have little hooks in there, and again you just have to work with it a little bit and try to squeeze it a little bit and lift up and pull out on it. And again, I've broken the tabs on them, too. It gets cold...

ADAM

Well, I guess I'm going to play with it and then if that doesn't work maybe I'll call you back.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

ADAM

And what's the number I can call you back on, during the week?

JOHN SOWDEN

You can always reach our repairclinic.com call center. I shouldn't say always, we're open eight a.m. until midnight. And the number there is 888-34-FIXIT.

ADAM

Very good! Thank you very much!

JOHN SOWDEN

When you get the cover off and you see that plastic door is all the way closed, just take a piece of cardboard or a piece of paper and roll it up until it's a quarter inch wide, and just push it in there and force that little flapper open. That will allow it to start cooling. Normally, those things stay about half open all the time, and that will get it good enough that you won't lose your milk until you can get a new [control](#).

Kelvinator Side by Side Refrigerator/Freezer: How to Clean the Condenser

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And now we'll go back to Margaret in Laingsburg, Michigan with a question on cleaning her [refrigerator](#) condenser here on the Appliance Repair Show.

MARGARET

I have a [Kelvinator upright freezer](#).

JOHN MCCULLOCH

What's your question?

MARGARET

The question is I have a side by side. Now should that condenser be self-defrosting?

JOHN SOWDEN

It should be self-defrosting. Is this a refrigerator/freezer, or just a freezer?

MARGARET

The [freezer](#) is on one side and the [refrigerator](#) is on the other side.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, it's a [side by side](#).

MARGARET

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you want to know how to clean the condenser?

MARGARET

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often the condenser is underneath the unit, and there are some that have...Do you have a big black radiator looking thing on the back of your refrigerator?

MARGARET

I think so.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. If you have one that's on the back of the [refrigerator](#), that's called a static condenser, and those really don't require a lot of cleaning. You can dust them off or vacuum them off. But those, because they are fixed to the back of the refrigerator and they have a lot of room air migrating around them, they don't attract a lot of dust. The ones you have to worry about cleaning are the ones tucked underneath the refrigerator and a fan that cools them, and that fan pulls in a lot of dust and dirt from the room air as well as pet hair and things of that nature, and it plugs up that condenser. So if you have one that's on the back of the refrigerator, I wouldn't worry too much about it. You could take the back off and vacuum it, but if it's the one underneath the machine, you might have to remove the [kick panel](#) and get in there with a hose attachment and a [brush](#) to clean it out. On some units you need to pull it all the way out and remove the back cover.

MARGARET

I have broken my hip and I can't pull it out. I've got to get help!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, if you have a handyman or someone in the family that can come over and look at it for you, they can normally with a flashlight have a quick look underneath it to assess the situation, and then from there they can go about keeping it clean for you.

MARGARET

Now, I've got an [upright freezer](#), too. It's a Kelvinator, it's about ten years old and I've never cleaned it. Should I clean underneath that too?

JOHN SOWDEN

Upright freezers, they can either have the coil on the back, they can have the coil on the underside, and a lot of upright freezers the coils are actually between the inner and outer liner. They call that a hot wall condenser. Most [chest freezers](#) are that way, but there are quite a few uprights that are that way as well. If that's the case then there are no serviceable parts there and you don't have to worry about that. So same rule applies to your freezer as it does to your refrigerator, which is make a visible inspection of what configuration of condenser you have, and then you can get your plan of attack as far as maintenance goes.

MARGARET

Yeah, I've got a special [brush](#) for that, but since I broke my hip I'm not so handy anymore.

JOHN SOWDEN

I'm sorry to hear that. If you've got a handyman or someone that you know who can come over and do that. You might actually want to make a to-do list, like the guy who was talking about having his Christmas to-do list. If you have several things around the house that need to be done you might want to have somebody come over and take care of all those things for you.

2001 Roper Gas Dryer Taking Too Long to Dry with Condensation around the Drum

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's a question on a [Roper gas dryer](#) from Pat in North Branch on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Pat, go ahead.

PAT

My dryer, I would say its maybe six years old at the most, but it [takes like three or four cycles to dry anything](#), whether it's a small load or a medium load. And then around on the inside of the door—like where it's raised up a little bit—around that rim is like moist lint and if there's hair or anything, it's in around there. And I can actually wipe it off and get a small amount in my hand.

JOHN SOWDEN

You're getting condensation around the drum, then?

PAT

Right, exactly.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, most often [long dry times](#) are attributed to a plugged vent going outside and I know that you guys have had some snow up there—I was actually in South Branch yesterday doing some snowmobiling—so you want to make sure your dryer vent outside is not restricted or in a snow bank. The other thing to do is inspect the length of the vent and make sure it's clean. One way, again, to see if the problem is in your dryer vent or the dryer itself is to simply unplug the vent. Just disconnect it and try to do a load. If it then starts to work properly, you know the problem is in your venting and you have to tear it apart and clean it. If that's not the problem, in your particular case being a gas dryer, the most common failing items would be the [igniter](#) or the [coils on the gas valves](#) themselves have failed. Both are pretty straightforward do-it-yourselfer type jobs and not super expensive as far as replacement parts go.

PAT

So I unplug my vent and just do a load without it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Being a gas dryer you don't want to vent the thing into your home on a repetitive basis, but to just do one load, a small load, throw it in there for a half hour or forty-five minutes and if the clothes come out dry, then you know that the vent's plugged up.

PAT

Ok, thank you so much and have a good new year.

1999 Kenmore Gas Oven Not Heating

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Ed in Brighton with a [Kenmore oven](#) question on the Appliance Repair Show.

ED

Good morning, gentlemen. I have a Kenmore standing oven and stove, about eight years old. And on Christmas morning I went to use it and the [oven didn't work](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, the Christmas tragedy stories, I wondered if we were going to get one or not!

ED

Yeah. So I ordered what I thought it might be which is the [igniter](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

That's the most common failing part.

ED

The broiler still works and everything else works but that. Then I got to thinking maybe it's the [thermostat](#) or the [keypad](#) or whatever. Should I just go ahead and change the igniter, since nine out of ten times it is that?

JOHN SOWDEN

That is most commonly the problem on a unit five to ten years old with normal use. Most often people use the oven many, many times more than the broiler, and so that's why the broiler probably works in the oven but bake does not. Can you see the [oven igniter](#) glowing?

ED

No, it won't glow.

JOHN SOWDEN

The oven igniter doesn't glow at all? Ok. A lot of times it will glow and it's still at fault. If it's not glowing, you can check that with an [ohmmeter](#). Most of them, if you pull that out you'll see a small crack in the igniter itself.

ED

Ok. I did unplug the connection and I used an ohmmeter for continuity, from the plug end.

JOHN SOWDEN

And did it show continuity?

ED

No, it didn't show anything.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, then you've got an open oven igniter.

ED

Which is what we were thinking, then?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, if you've disconnected it and you checked the [oven igniter](#) and you showed zero resistance, then you in fact have got an open circuit there, and that means that the oven igniter is faulty. I'm just trying to look here and see if the igniter...sometimes they'll use the same igniter for the bake and the broil, where you could have possibly just switched them and saved your Christmas. But if not, then you need to get the right one, because they're rated to interact with the valve properly.

ED

Oh, I see. Ok.

JOHN SOWDEN

But from what you're describing, if you've already done an electrical check and you have an open circuit, then it's time for a new oven igniter, and our parts counter is open today until six o'clock and being in Brighton you're probably about a thirty or forty minute

drive, if you need to get it going for a New Years' party to make up for the Christmas debacle that you had.

ED

That's what I was going to do. I noticed you're out by Beck Road down there.

JOHN SOWDEN

And if you have the [igniter](#) they can actually verify it for you at the counter.

ED

Oh, that would be great too.

JOHN SOWDEN

We can check it with an [ohmmeter](#) as well. At times people have ohmmeters that the battery is dead on or other things that you might not get the right reading. Yeah, most often you can do that, and if you give us a call ahead of time or place an order ahead of time, we can have it ready for you when you walk in the door. We have a call ahead one hour or place an order on the web in one hour for customer pick up, where you can just walk in and say, "I'm Ed from Brighton", (and we need your last name too) and they'll go ahead and get it for you. And make sure you get the bake, not the broil, igniter.