

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—April 13, 2008

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Kenmore Front Loading Washing Machine with Door that Doesn't Lock

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll start things off with a [Kenmore washer](#) and Chris in Manchester, Michigan on the Appliance Repair Show.

CHRIS

Hi. We have a Kenmore washer; it's a front-loading washing machine. And it gets the [error code DL](#), which is door lock. You push it, you start it, but it doesn't lock.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. This is a front-loading Kenmore, newer unit?

CHRIS

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you're getting a DL for the door lock.

CHRIS

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, normally it's one of two things. It's either that the actuator or the piece on the door itself that goes into the frame that the [door lock](#) actually catches is broken. If that's not

what's happening, if that's intact, then it's normally the door lock assembly. That comes as all one piece.

CHRIS

OK. Well, it goes through a series of clicks before it gives that error code. We had unplugged the machine overnight and then tried it again and it actually worked once and then stopped working again. You can hear that clicking, so it isn't actually latching obviously. But just wondered, is it the mechanism that may be broken, or is it something more electrical like in the computer?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the mechanism itself, the [door latch assembly](#) is all one piece, and there's several switches on that, so they all have to be, when you close the door it locks the door and these switches are opened and closed accordingly. That's what the computer is reading, are these switches opened and closed properly? If not, then the computer gives you the failure code.

CHRIS

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

If the actuator is not broken on the door, then I would suspect the door lock mechanism, which is one long plastic piece with a series of switches. I think there's like a half dozen wires going to it, and you have to remove the front panel to get at that.

CHRIS

OK. Very good, well thank you very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you go to our website, repairclinic.com, and put in the model number of the washer as it reads off of the machine in the search box, you'll see a picture of the door lock assembly as well as all the other parts for your unit. It will give you an idea of what you're looking for.

1998 GE Profile Washing Machine Leaving Oil Spots on Clothes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll go next to Ottawa Lake, Michigan to Dan with a question on a GE washer on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Dan.

DAN

I have a [GE Profile washer](#) that's about ten years old. Occasionally when we're doing a load of lighter clothes we'll end up with little oil spots on the clothes. The spots are about an eighth of an inch in diameter and scattered throughout the clothes.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. Are you sure that it's oil? Can you treat it and rewash the clothes and the stain goes away?

DAN

I don't know for sure. I think they're pretty stubborn. My wife's worked on a few of the dress shirts and I think she's had mild success, but I'm not sure that it's oil, no. It appears to be oil.

JOHN SOWDEN

The reason I ask is at times fabric softener, if you have a buildup in the tub or underneath the [agitator](#), it can give an appearance of an oil stain but normally that will wash out. If it's not coming out then it's oil, and most often that is because the transmission seal itself has failed.

DAN

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you can tear it apart and rebuild it, but you're probably better to replace the [transmission](#) if you're going to repair the machine. On a ten year old unit, just in parts you're looking at one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars. So even if you did it yourself you would probably still be at half the cost of a new one.

DAN

I got you. OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's something that you need to address, because otherwise you'll keep ruining nice dress shirts and that's not cheap either.

DAN

Right, right. Thank you.

Maytag Washing Machine Question about Installing Properly Sized Drain

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's a question on a Maytag washer from Joe in Adrian on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Joe.

JOE

I've got an older house and I'm putting in a drain for a new [Maytag washer](#). And I was curious whether an inch and a half is big enough, or does it have to be bigger?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most of the time an inch and a half will be enough. The machine itself normally will tell you in the installation manual what size that they require. Obviously they want to make it

big enough because the machines are designed to drain in a certain amount of time, so the water comes out pretty quick. If you don't have a big enough drain or if you have too many elbows, then you run into situations where either, it will overflow back up through the stand pipe, or at times after it shuts off you start siphoning water out of the machine so it will just sit and fill for a long time. Most of the time an inch and a half is OK, but I would check the machine that you're looking at purchasing and look at the installation instructions. At times the manufacturer will even post that on their website. So if you know the model number you could go to maytag.com and see if they have a listing. I just don't want to tell you to plumb it one way and then have this particular unit's requirements make you unhappy. But normally that's the norm, an inch and a half. Some people go to two inches so they don't have to worry about it, but I would definitely consult the manufacturer's installation guide.

JOE

OK. Thank you, sir.

2005 GE Dishwasher Not Draining Properly

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll go to Jim in Rochester with a question on a [dishwasher not draining](#) here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Jim.

JIM

I got a three year old dishwasher. It's a [GE](#). It goes through all the cycles properly, but when it reaches the drain cycle I can see the water coming out through the vent there, and it only pumps out a small portion and then it just stops.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. When you talk about the vent, you mean the air vent on your sink?

JIM

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

And is it spraying out of the [air gap](#)?

JIM

No, it's just running out at normally pace. Is there a [float](#) or something that determines how much it pumps out?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the first thing you need to do is make sure the drain is clear all the way to the garbage disposal, assuming that you have it hooked up to a disposal if you've got an air gap. Make sure that the tube going from the air gap to the disposal is not restricted, which can cause it to back up. Normally if that's the case then you will have water squirting out of that little air gap on your sink because it has no where else to go.

JIM

Right, I've seen that happen, but that's not happening this time.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. So it's just a low push of water, then?

JIM

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, on your machine there are a few things that have to happen. When you go to drain, do you normally hear a click or loud thump as it goes into the drain cycle?

JIM

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you are hearing that?

JIM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. That's telling me that the [solenoid](#) on the main pump assembly is in fact actuating and is opening up the drain port. From there the water has to go through a [check valve](#) and then out the secondary [drain pump](#). More than likely, you have a problem with either the secondary drain pump, which is not too likely because they don't fail that often. Most common thing that can cause this is what they call the [piston and nut assembly](#), which is basically a check valve. If you look at the back of your machine, you'll see a three or four inch wide grate that goes across the back of the dishwasher. Underneath that there are a few screws you have to remove, and in the very center there's this check valve that just screws into that rear pump trap assembly. If that does not seal properly when you go to pump the water, it will not divert the water to the drain pump assembly or the auxiliary pump assembly.

JIM

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's the first thing I would check. If you unscrew that and pull it out and look, you'll see it's got a little mushroom shaped seal and if it's deteriorating or part of it's missing, that's more than likely the problem. That's a fairly common issue. Now if that's all right, then again, you could have some restricted lines in the drain portion in the machine, or the secondary drain pump itself has failed, or something got in there and broke some of the impellers off. I think if you unscrew that piston assembly, you'll see that's probably

worn. All it needs to do is not seal up once, and the water re-circulates around the system rather than getting diverted out the drain.

JIM

OK. I'll give it a shot.

2003 Maytag Top Loading Washing Machine Leaking Underneath and onto the Floor during Drain and Spin Cycles on Extra Large Load Setting

JOHN SOWDEN

And here's Ken in Toledo, with a Maytag washer question on the Appliance Repair Show.

KEN

I have a [Maytag washer](#) that's about five years old. I don't know exactly what the model number is, but the issue that we're having with it is that on the extra large load cycle, as it goes through the cycle it washes the clothes fine and all of that, but then there's a [leak underneath the washer](#). The water just flows out from underneath the washer: not a whole lot of water, but enough to ruin the floor. I had a repair guy come out and look at it. He took it apart and his diagnosis was that here's nothing wrong with it. So I don't know where the water's coming from. But every time that we use the extra large load cycle, there will be water underneath the machine as it goes through its draining and spin cycles.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. Is this a first floor laundry?

KEN

Yes, it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And you have water underneath the machine?

KEN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, this is a top loader, correct?

KEN

Yes it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And this only occurs when you use the most amount of water you can put in the tank?

KEN

That's correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how much water would you say that you're getting on the floor? Is it a cupful, a half a gallon?

KEN

I would say maybe a pint.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Well, if it's doing it at one specific time, or when you use one specific cycle, more than likely what's happening is, as the water is draining out of the machine, it's sloshing up over the top of the tub, which would be from the unit [not draining](#) in the amount of time it's supposed to. Does this go into a stand pipe or does it go into a laundry tub?

KEN

It goes into a stand pipe that's behind the washer. I checked that and it's totally dry.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. So it's not backing up from the drain?

KEN

No, and it's not splashing out of the drain.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how long ago did you have this service person out?

KEN

It was probably six to eight months ago.

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, OK. Because most places will guarantee their service calls for at least a month or so. I always try to reproduce what the customer is doing, meaning if they are using it on the extra heavy load with a lot of clothes in it, then that's what I would do to fill it up and see. The problem, it sounds like, is being caused by the amount of water in the tub. It could be that it's just [not draining](#) up to speed. It's possible that a worn [belt](#) could cause that or something caught in the [pump](#). Also on the top of the outer tub there's a cover, and most of those have a series of small holes in them so if water is splashed out during agitation, it collects on the top of this cover and then it will drain back into the tank through this series of small holes. Over time you can get fabric softener and/or detergent that will plug those holes. So what happens is you get kind of a puddle of water in the top of the tank, and then when you go into spin, it just throws it off; normally the unit fills and drains a couple of times during a normal load, you'll get enough water that it will start [dripping out onto the floor](#). Unfortunately all you really can do is just pop the front panel off that, and you have to grab your lawn chair and a flashlight, and put in a full load of clothes at extra-high setting and you're going to have to just look and see to determine where the water's coming from. Because a lot of times, even if it's dripping off the base

or wherever the water is leaking on the floor externally on the machine, it might not be coming from where you think it is internally on the machine.

KEN
Uh huh.

JOHN SOWDEN
So, it's best to [remove the front panel](#) and have a look and see. A lot of times you can just get in there with a flashlight and you can see traces of where the water has been dripping because the soap will leave a white residue.

KEN
Well that's a good suggestion. I'll try that.

1996 Speed Queen Washing Machine Model AA4410W Not Draining Properly

JOHN MCCULLOCH
And here's a question on a [Speed Queen washer](#) not draining properly from Tom in Flint, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Tom.

TOM
My model number is AA4410W.

JOHN SOWDEN
Ok, it's about a ten or twelve year old Speed Queen?

TOM
Yes. When I have towels in there or anything, when it spins [it doesn't seem to spin all the water out](#). When I put it through another spin cycle it kind of gets more water out.

JOHN SOWDEN
Is there water left in the tank or the [clothes are still pretty wet](#)?

TOM
The clothes are pretty wet.

JOHN SOWDEN
OK. But for all general purposes, it seems like its getting most of the water out?

TOM
It seems like it's not getting most of the water out.

JOHN SOWDEN
But what I'm saying is, when you open the lid after the cycle is done, do you physically see water or do you just see a bunch of wet clothes but there's not a lot of water standing in the tank?

TOM

I see a bunch of wet clothes.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, it sounds like it's draining, but [it's not spinning or extracting the water out](#) of the clothes?

TOM

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be something as simple as a worn [belt](#). The belt in that machine is actually made to slip on startup—it acts as the clutch. You've got the motor turning at 350 RPMs and you've got the transmission turning at zero when it first starts; so as it starts up this belt is made to allow the [motor pulley](#) to spin inside it and it slowly gets up to speed. So it could be that the belt could be worn and it's not engaging the [transmission](#) properly. Have you noticed any [water leaks](#) lately?

TOM

No.

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing that could cause this, and if it's not the belt it's probably the second most common, is that the tub bearing itself has failed.

TOM

What kind of bearing?

JOHN SOWDEN

The [tub bearing](#). That's the part that mounts to the outer tub and the transmission goes up through it. And if that has failed, you'll get a lot of drag. So it will spin but it won't spin up to speed: instead of spinning at four or five hundred RPMs it will spin at half of that, and you'll still have a lot of wet clothes. On this unit there are two screws at the bottom of the front panel that you can take off and then the front panel will pop off. Then you can take a flashlight and look at where the transmission goes into the outer tub and see if you see any signs of a leak there. If you do, that's probably a sign that the main tub seal has failed, which then allows water to leak into the tub bearing and causes the tub bearing to seize up.

TOM

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

And the other thing is the belt itself. I do believe on that unit it is underneath the machine, and those aren't too bad to change. If you see any big gouges in it or burn spots, it could

be that as well. But I'd start by looking at the [leak situation](#). And on occasion you'll have a situation where you'll have a piece of clothing caught between the inner and outer tub, especially if you're washing a lot of small garments like children's clothing or wash cloths. Sometimes if you use the extra high setting, once in a while a small garment will flip over the outer tub and get stuck between the inner and outer tub. That will cause drag on that and cause it to not spin as well.

TOM

OK. So how would you get at that garment inside?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's where all the fun begins. The easiest way is to grab a flashlight and look through all the holes in there and see if you can see something. If not, if it's caught on the underside, then you need to take the front panel off and fold the top panel back and remove the top cover of the outer tub, and take the [agitator](#) off. Then there are four or five bolts that hold down the inner tub that you will have to take off. Try not to break them, because water and metal after ten years kind of get seized in place a little bit. And then you can take the inner tub out and access the underside of it.

TOM

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. So there are two or three places to look.

2005 GE Profile Model JT955 Double Oven Thirty Inch Lower Oven Showing F2 Error Code

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Gayle from Huron, Ohio has a problem with an [oven](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show.

GAYLE

I have a GE Profile double oven, [model JT955](#) and it's a thirty inch. It's the lower oven, it will go to [F2](#), and I've tried turning it off for thirty minutes, and I also tried shutting it off at the electrical box for so long and then turning it back on. It starts up again, it heats up, and then about ten minutes into the cycle it goes back to F2.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And this is just on the lower oven?

GAYLE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. The good news is it's giving you a fault code. And F2 could mean a bad [sensor](#), or it could mean a bad [control board](#). If you go to our website, repairclinic.com, and in the search box just type in "fault code", it will take you right to our fault code page. You can scroll down to the GE section of it; for all the different appliances, just look for the [GE oven fault codes](#) and it will tell you what component has more than likely failed for your particular problem.

GAYLE
OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

So normally, it's a bad sensor or a bad control board. If it's a bad control board you're probably looking at a few hundred dollars for the parts; the sensor is normally about half of that. Again, with it being a [built-in oven](#) I'm assuming you're going to repair it. You don't normally throw those away.

GAYLE

Well, it's only two and a half years old!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. And you may want to call the manufacturer first and see if they'll give you any help on it. Being that it's over a year old, I would not expect much, but once in a while if you get somebody in a good mood and plead your case well enough you can sometimes get a concession. I'd try that first. You might find it worth your time. If not you can always go to our website and we can direct you to the component that's more than likely failed. And if you don't feel comfortable working on it, you can certainly call a service person. You can even order the parts and have them waiting for him when he gets there. That way it will speed things up for you.

GAYLE

Thank you.

2006 Kenmore Electric Dryer Not Heating Properly

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go for another question on a [Kenmore](#) appliance, this time a dryer, from Margaret in Sandusky, Ohio, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Margaret.

MARGARET

Yes. I have this dryer. In two years we had the [heating element](#) replaced because it wasn't heating right. And it's acting the same way. We had two different gentlemen come out and they took a tissue and took the lint catcher out and said it wasn't set up properly. And when it wasn't heating right, that's when we called them out.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. Let's back up a little bit here. You said that the [dryer wasn't heating properly](#), and they came out and they did what again?

MARGARET

They told us it wasn't hooked up right. It goes up through the roof...

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, you have a venting problem!

MARGARET

No, they told us we did. And then finally a forth or fifth time I called them up. I said this isn't right because when I first had it, it heated up really good.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK, now the vent on this, you say it goes from the back of the dryer and then you say it goes through the ceiling to vents on the roof?

MARGARET

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And has that been cleaned at all?

MARGARET

Yes, we cleaned it.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And you're sure it's clean all the way up?

MARGARETT

Yes. My husband cleaned it. And now it is acting up the same way.

JOHN SOWDEN

After you've cleaned it, it's still acting up, or you have to periodically...see, a too long a vent will cause the lint to build up much quicker than it would otherwise. You might have to routinely, once every six months or so, clean it from the dryer all the way up to the top of the roof. Especially pay attention to the flapper or end cap on the roof, to make sure that that's able to open properly.

MARGARET

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

Here's an easy way to see if the dryer is the problem or if the venting is the problem. This is an [electric dryer](#), correct?

MARGARET

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would just recommend that you disconnect it from the vent wherever you have it hooked up and throw a load of clothes in. Just do one load and set it at what you normally would, and if the dryer works properly, without the vent hooked up, then the problem is in your vent. Whether it's too long or partially restricted somewhere, that's an easy tell tale sign. Just disconnect it, run one load, and I say one load because you're going to get a lot of humidity in the house but you're not going to blow a lot of lint all over. It's kind of a test case. If it continues to have problems, then you could have a problem inside the dryer, which could be a [thermostat](#) that's not working properly. The other thing is that if you've had a plugged or restricted vent at one time, that lint has to go somewhere. Normally it goes in the blower housing, which is in the internal portion of the dryer; it may require tearing the unit apart and physically getting in there and cleaning out all the air flow tubing and duct work in the dryer itself to get it to work properly again.

MARGARET

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, I would recommend first thing, disconnect it and run it. If it works fine, then you know that the problem is in the vent. Because every one is different, I can't tell you what to do specifically about it. You might want to have somebody come out, even a builder or handyman, to look at it. If not, then I would lean more towards starting by cleaning the whole dryer out. If that doesn't work then I'd start looking at a possible electrical component failing, like a thermostat or something of that nature.

MARGARET

It could be something different, like the [heating element](#); it was just two years old, and we didn't think it should have burned out that fast.

JOHN SOWDEN

It shouldn't have, normally you'll get several years at least out of one. The reason that you get limited lifespan on components is excess heat. If the vent is plugged or it's having a hard time exhausting, or if the vent's just too long, then what happens is that element is cycling on and off with not enough airflow going across it, and eventually it will weaken and break.

MARGARET

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

So one condition can cause the other one to fail.

MARGARET

Thank you ever so much.

2001 Kenmore Elite Calypso Top Loading Washing Machine Not Draining With Error Codes LD and LS

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go with Mark in Tiffin, Ohio who has a question. I guess its washer day today.

JOHN SOWDEN

It seems to be. Mark, you're on the radio. Go ahead please.

MARK

I have a Kenmore Elite [Calypso washer](#). It's a 2001 model.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. It's one of the earlier ones.

MARK

And we [can't get any water to drain](#) out the bottom. It doesn't seem like, when it comes into spin cycle, that anything will go out.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. Is it giving you any error codes?

MARK

No, it's not giving us any error codes.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. Have you ever had any work done to this?

MARK

No.

JOHN SOWDEN

More than likely you want to start at the [pump](#) on this unit.

MARK

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

First of all, see if it's just plugged up with lint and things of that nature. If that's clear, it could be the pump itself: either the [motor](#) has failed, or the pump internally is stripped out.

MARK

OK, well it actually sounds like the pump is trying to start, but it won't do anything.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, basically the original version of that the pump you could replace separately and it just snapped on top of the motor. But now you have to get the complete [pump assembly](#) with the motor for that particular unit. From what you're describing, again I would start with the pump assembly. What could have happened is the seal on the pump leaked into the motor and then failed.

MARK

All right.

JOHN SOWDEN

But also in that unit, the tub itself has got a couple check balls in it that are made to seal off and allow the unit to drain and to circulate the water versus not circulate the water. It's possible that if you've got a lot of lint and things built up in that area of the tub, that it would prevent the check balls from seating properly and allowing it to drain.

MARK

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

The first thing I'd do is just make sure that the circulating portion of it is free of lint and things of that nature.

MARK

OK. And how can a person get in there to check that?

JOHN SOWDEN

The front panel comes off on that machine. Normally on the very front of it there's a decal that says Calypso or Kenmore. If you remove that there's going to be a screw behind it, and then you can take the front panel off from there. And then you can at least get inside enough to get a look at what you're dealing with as far as accessing the pump. You get nothing out of it, right?

MARK

Right. I actually took the [discharge hose](#) off, just to make sure it was clean. I blew through it and there's nothing in that. I can see down the drain and there's nothing there. I got about ten gallons of water out on the floor when I took that discharge hose off there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. You still could have a restriction in there, or again there could be something caught in the pump that's not allowing it to physically get the water through it, or the pump itself has failed. On a machine of that vintage, that style, the pump failing is not an uncommon thing. But I would start there, and you have to get the front panel off. You can also get a [manual](#) for that unit. Go to our website, repairclinic.com, and put the model number in and you should be able to see the manual for that. With all the electronics on that

particular unit, it's probably a good investment. I think they are twenty or twenty five bucks.

MARK

OK. Now my wife is telling me that we did have an error on the display. It was [LD](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah.

MARK

And [LS](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

I do believe LD is a draining failure. So it's telling you it's [not draining](#). There are actually pressure switches inside there that monitor the fill and drain, and after so many seconds, if you still have water in there, the [pressure switch](#) is still satisfied and the control board will say, hey, it's not draining. Again, there are several reasons why it might not be draining, and normally it's a physical restriction from a lint buildup in the [pump assembly](#) or the hose going from the outer tub to the pump. Or the pump itself has just failed.

MARK

That's right. And when it tries to run, it slops water out the top instead of going out the drain. Obviously it can't get away that way.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be all related. It's not being pushed through properly. In tearing it apart if for some reason you take the center portion of that off, you get that little nub in the middle of it, if you take that off, that pops off and there's a series of screws to take the wash plate off. If you do that, you need to replace that seal. You do not want to take that apart and not replace the seal, because often what happens is water leaks into that knuckle assembly and those U-joints in there and that becomes an expensive repair.

MARK

And what would be the life expectancy on a machine like this?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a good question. They've only been out since you bought yours. As far as what it's going to be like ten or twenty years from now, I don't know. I personally like the machine; I actually owned one at one point. They're nice, you can put a lot of stuff in there, and they're good on water consumption and soap usage and all that. They're basically a high efficiency top loader.

MARK

Well, we haven't had a lick of trouble with it until today.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's good news. If you have to put a few hundred bucks into it—I think they're probably a thousand bucks new for one of those, so it's still not a cheap washer to just throw away. At the least have a service guy come out if you get in over your head with it.