

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—May 4, 2008

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How to Prepare Appliances for Long Term Storage

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on how to store appliances, Tom in Dearborn, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Tom. Go ahead please.

TOM

Yes. My daughter is going to store items from her home for quite a while, and I was wondering if there was something I should know about the appliances that hold liquids. You know, like the [refrigerator](#), the [washer](#), and storing it in cold weather.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you're going to be storing these, I'm assuming for quite a while, into next winter here in Michigan is what the plan is?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Anything that holds water, you certainly want to try to drain the water out of the machine. You can also use some RV type anti-freeze; pour a small amount in and that will keep it from freezing. Obviously, a lot of the [pumps](#) and things these days are made of plastic, so if the water's in there without anti-freeze, it expands when it freezes and cracks. So a lot of people, especially this time of year, when they're heading up to northern Michigan and opening up their cottages, if they haven't winterized their stuff properly are finding out that they've got some issues when they turn the water on. The other thing you want to

consider is, with things like the [refrigerator](#) you may want to leave the door slightly ajar to let some air in there. It keeps it from molding and things if you've got moisture in there when you store it.

TOM
Oh, okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But depending on where you're putting them, you don't want to leave the door open too far, maybe just a crack and then tape the door shut because, depending again on where you're planning on putting it, critters like to get in there. I've seen where mice have gotten into stored units and tunneled through the foam insulation in the [refrigerator](#) and chewed all the wiring and created a real mess. So a lot of it depends if it's going to be inside or outside, if you're going to put it in a barn somewhere. So I would make an inspection and make sure that there wasn't anything in there that was chewing on the wiring or anything of that nature before you plug it in.

TOM
And that was RV anti-freeze?

JOHN SOWDEN
Yes.

TOM
Okay. One other item, if I may. I had called about two months ago. My [refrigerator](#) was leaking, and being a non-mechanical person, I just figured, oh boy something has sprung a leak, a [hose](#) is gone, or something. Anyway, I asked you and you described what I should do. I had a towel for a month under there just sucking up the water. You were exactly right. I was a hero in my wife's eyes, so I just wanted to thank you. The problem was exactly what you said it was!

JOHN SOWDEN
Well, that's once in a row for me, and I do appreciate your comments!

Top Loading Washing Machine Has Musty Odor the Day After Use

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here is Mary, in Riverview, with a [washing machine](#) that smells a little bit funny, here on the Appliance Repair Show.

MARY

I need to process this with the fact that, I used to do two loads a day. Now the kids are out of the house, and I'm only doing one load every other day. It's like a stagnant water smell that I'm getting, and I know if I pour vinegar in the sink where the [hose](#) empties, it will go away, but usually we don't get the smell until the day after we use the washer. So I don't know if it's the [washer](#) or the drain.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a [front loading washing machine](#)?

MARY

A top.

JOHN SOWDEN

[A top loader](#)? And you're getting a—

MARY

Right. It's a musty odor, like rotten eggs sometimes.

JOHN SOWDEN

A lot of time what happens is, the soap and things of that nature will form a film on the outer tub or underneath the [agitator](#) and lack of use will cause it to sometimes develop some mold or things of that nature. I would recommend using the hot cycle, run it empty, use the hot water setting, and pour in a little bleach, and go ahead and use the unit to agitate and before it spins the water out, run it through a few more cycles. You might have to baby sit it a little bit, but let it agitate for about a half hour or so with that hot water in there, and that might dissolve some of the things that are causing that. And the other thing to check is the drain it goes into, things of that nature. It could be coming from the drain itself, if there's a partial restriction or something else in there.

MARY

The water flows real well in that sink, so I don't think it's bad, but it could be what's sitting in the washer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. All of the machines will hold some water in there to keep the seals on the [pump](#) wet so they won't dry out and start [leaking](#). So to have some water in there at all times is normal. But again, lack of use, and depending on your water, if you're on a well or if the water's been treated, there are a lot of things that can cause a musty odor.

MARY

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But one of the bigger things is just if it's an older unit, over time especially if you use the same water level all the time, the top of that is going to develop somewhat of a film, and then along the edge you're going to get that. You may even want to remove the [top cover](#) on the outer tub, and clean all that off of there, which involves a little more disassembly.

MARY

Well, I'll give that a shot. Thank you for your help!

Kenmore Dishwasher Making Loud Noises After Fill Cycle

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a [Kenmore dishwasher](#), Matt in Attica, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Matt, go ahead please.

MATT

Hey John. I've got [a dishwasher that's making all kinds of noises](#) after it's gone through the fill cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. So it's doing it after it fills, not during?

MATT

Yeah, during the washing part of it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Have you broken any wine glasses? Have you noticed anything missing?

MATT

Not that I'm aware of.

JOHN SOWDEN

Alright. You say after the fill cycle. That's good, because at times what can happen is during the fill cycle the [water valve](#) will hammer and cause that but if it's doing it after it fills, I would say that the problem more than likely lies in the [pump and motor assembly](#).

MATT

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you can tear that out. That actually is kind of a twist in place [motor](#) complete assembly that snaps into that lower housing. So, you can turn that out of there after you disconnect the wiring and just take out the [motor and pump](#). They do have a [rebuild kit](#) for that which comes with the [chopper](#) and the [impellers](#), but you're probably better off to just replace it. If that's all broken up, make sure there's nothing left in the machine, and then just snap in a new motor pump assembly.

MATT

Very good.

JOHN SOWDEN

The problem with rebuilding them is that not always is it a long term solution. If you don't get everything put back together right, the [water seal](#) will start leaking water into the [motor](#), and you might see that there's a water leak going on there and eventually ruins

the motor bearing anyway. So, it's better to just replace the snap in assembly and carry on.

MATT

Okay, John. Thank you very much.

Kitchen Aid Dishwasher Door Seal Keeps Falling Off and Leaking

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Rich in Washington, Michigan on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Rich.

RICH

Hi. I have a, I think you have the [model number](#). It's a [Kitchen Aid](#). At the bottom there's a [seal on the door](#), and what happens is, I put the seal on, it's just a plastic piece that goes on the stainless steel, and it keeps falling off. This is about my third one; I bought it at a parts distributor. It's a [Whirlpool](#) replacement [seal](#) that has a lifetime warranty. It's about a four dollar seal, and it's like a plastic extrusion, but it just keeps falling off. I've tried putting some silicone on it, but it doesn't seal property then, and I get leaks at the bottom. Any recommendations?

JOHN SOWDEN

Did you replace the [seal](#), or the [seal kit](#)? The seal kit comes with the two end corner caps too?

RICH

Yeah, I replaced those [end corner caps](#) also, first. But when I let the seal I just snap it on, it's free flowing and it seals beautifully; but it does fall off when you open the [dishwasher](#) after about four or five times and you have to snap it back on. This has been going on for about a year.

JOHN SOWDEN

I haven't had many complaints about that particular one. You're sure you're getting it snapped firmly in place when it goes onto the door itself?

RICH.

I think by design. I tried to snap it on, I'm looking at it right now, pushing it on and it does not snap on permanently.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. You might try gently, like with a rubber mallet, try tapping it in there. Just gently try to get it to really pinch on the door if it keeps falling off. I would try that first. I don't recall any service flashes on that, where it's been an issue, so normally in a situation like that it's just not getting on all the way. The other thing is if you're getting door leaks from that, which is probably your original problem, make sure that your [dishwasher](#) is perfectly level or just slightly tilted back. If it's tilted forward when the thing starts up, it creates a wave in the bottom and it can cause water to shoot out the front of the tank. So

while you're in there, just check the water level of the [dishwasher](#). But I'd start by just trying to tap it on, not a lot of force, but just see if you can get it to snap better in place.

RICH

Thank you very much.

Dryer Starting Without Pushing the Start Button

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a [dryer](#), John in Cheboygan, on the Appliance Repair Show.

JOHN

I've got the dryer down in Florida, and I happen to be traveling in Detroit right now. What happens is, when I want to start up the [dryer](#), its fine. I put everything in there, and when I got to turn it for the [timer](#), it immediately starts. Or, if the machine is running and I open the door, and then I close it and it immediately starts up without my having to push the [start button](#). What do you think is wrong? The [door switch](#) or the push to start button?

JOHN SOWDEN

So you say when you start it up and you open the [dryer](#) door, it doesn't continue to run?

JOHN

It's running, you open the door and the machine will stop. The moment you close it, it starts running again without having to push the start [button](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

I would way that either the [start switch](#) is stuck in the on position, or it could be a problem in the [motor](#) itself where the [motor start switch](#) could have a short or a burnt contact that's always allowing the start winding to engage. At times, some of the weirder things that I've run into is some of the wiring in the unit is actually touching the frame and providing a circuit to ground, which can cause it to do that. So if everything else is not apparent, then I would look for a grounded common wire. Sometimes they'll get pinched or vibrate over time and touch the frame, so what you have is the common wire is touching the frame and providing a constant ground or complete path. Kind of a rare problem, but trust me, it's out there.

JOHN

It's not an intermittent thing. When it started, it just started.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. I'd look more at the [start switch](#) being stuck in that position. You can use the wiring diagram, which depending on the unit is either on the [back panel](#) or in the [control panel](#).

JOHN

I've got that already. I've looked at it. You've got to take it out of the circuit to measure it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you want to disconnect all the wiring to that, and then they have a chart that shows you what contacts are open and closed according to the [switch](#) itself. Most major manufacturers do a pretty good job of providing a decent wiring diagram for that.

JOHN

Very good, sir. Thank you!

2003 Kitchen Aid Free-standing Gas Stove Producing a Gas Smell and Soot Inside Oven

JOHN MCCULLOCH

With a question on a [Kitchen Aid stove](#), here's Kay in Lapeer, on the Appliance Repair Show. Kay, go ahead please.

KAY

Hi, we have a [Kitchen Aid range](#), and the oven [when you turn it on you can smell the gas](#), and the smell lingers for a while. There's a lot of soot inside the oven.

JOHN SOWDEN

A lot of soot inside the oven?

KAY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a [freestanding stove](#), a [wall oven](#), what is it?

KAY

Yes, it's a [Kitchen Aid range](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Range. A [free-standing range](#)?

KAY

Yes and it's gas. LP.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you're on LP. How old is the unit?

KAY

Five years.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often, the somewhat smell of gas and delayed ignition is caused by a weak [igniter](#). But the soot would lead me to believe that it's not adjusted properly.

KAY

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Did you have this converted to LP when you installed it?

KAY

Yes we did. We've had somebody come and look at it, but I don't know if they don't know what they're doing, they just never seem to adjust it right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, there are different styles out there. Some have a fixed [orifice](#), meaning that the hole that the gas goes through is one size, and there's no adjustment really on it except that comes as a [conversion kit](#). Other ones, by tightening or loosening the hood on the [valve](#), you then adjust that size. And of course, with different pressures and things of that nature, that's sometimes the easiest way to get an accurate adjustment. But if it's adjustable, really all you can do is look at the flame and manually adjust it until you visually get the flame that you're looking for, which is the nice blue flame with the yellow tips on it.

KAY

It should have yellow tips on it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Slightly. You want a nice blue flame. Most people that work on these can look at it and straightaway say yes this is good or no this is bad. Now what about the surface? Are you having any problems there?

KAY

No, the [surface burners](#) seem to be fine.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Because at times what will happen is people will convert the unit and it will come with a set of [orifices](#) for the top [surface burners](#), which are fixed, and then the lower one you have to adjust or replace, and sometimes people will forget to either adjust it or to put in the proper one. Now you said you had someone look at it. When you fire it up, have you noticed that you get a large flame on the [burner](#)?

KAY

Ding!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

That was a disconnect.

JOHN SOWDEN

I see.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

That occasionally happens. It sounded like a cell disconnect.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

GE XL Series Dryer Loose Felt Seal Between Rear Bulkhead and Drum

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a [Kenmore dryer](#), John in Cleveland, on the Appliance Repair Show. John, go ahead please.

JOHN

Yeah, it's probably not a Kenmore; it's probably a [GE](#). I'm sorry, I'm not 100% sure what it is. I bought it at Home Depot.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you bought it at Home Depot it's probably not a [Kenmore](#). Just for clarity, Kenmore is obviously a brand of appliance that's sold through the Sears network, but the majority of those appliances are actually purchased from a major manufacturer like [GE](#), [Whirlpool](#), [Frigidaire](#), and then the [Kenmore](#) name is put on them and then they're sold by the Kenmore name. So actually if you have a [Kenmore dryer](#), it could actually be a [GE](#) or [Whirlpool](#) or [Frigidaire dryer](#), etc. and they all would say Kenmore on the front. But if you bought it at Home Depot, I don't think they're supporting the Sears network! At any rate, you've got a [dryer](#) and you have a question about it, so ahead.

JOHN

Well, there's this little, it's not rubber, it's some kind of fiber material. A [gasket](#) that is at the back of the machine that separates the center part that doesn't move from the spinning drum.

JOHN SOWDEN

This is on the back of the drum between the rear bulkhead and the drum itself?

JOHN

Yes sir.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it's a [felt seal](#)?

JOHN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it's not staying in place?

JOHN

It's not staying in place.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, is it torn or discolored?

JOHN

No, no. It just came out. Still looks pretty good.

JOHN SOWDEN

That is actually glued to the back of the dryer drum.

JOHN

So I can re-glue it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, they use a [high-temperature adhesive](#) (part# 5308027429), which I think is about ten or twelve bucks per tube. You can actually order a [new seal](#), if it's been torn, and once you get it out you might notice on the backside that it's been torn in places. Most of the time, the [rear dryer seal](#) comes with that contact cement. I think they're roughly about thirty dollars. As far as disassembling the unit, it depends on what kind it is. It sounds like it's a [Whirlpool](#) to me.

JOHN

A [GE](#), I think. It's an XL series.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's probably a GE. You can look at our [website](#): get the [model number](#) as it reads off the dryer itself, go to [RepairClinic.com](#) and in the search box, put in the model number and you'll see a picture of the [rear seal](#) there. And then as far as how to get into the machine, if you go to the "[Repair Guru](#)" section of our site, or just go to the search box and type in "[Dryer Help](#)" we will take you right to pages where we have some breakdowns of the different machines. And if you go and put your email address in and want to ask a specific question, we also have some disassembly instructions for your particular unit.

JOHN

So I can't just go in through the front door and glue it in that way?

JOHN SOWDEN

No. You're going to have to tear it apart to get at the backside of it.

JOHN
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

If it's the [rear seal](#) on that, again depending for sure on what kind of dryer it is, you're going to have to pull the [dryer](#) out, and if it's torn, I would take the old one off, scrape off all the old glue on the drum, and glue it in place. Then let it sit (probably overnight is a good idea) and throw it back together.

JOHN

Okay. Thank you sir, I appreciate it!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

But he shouldn't use Elmer's glue.

JOHN SOWDEN

No, no, it's a short trip if you do. It's made to take the wear and tear and the high heat capability. So you want to use a proper [adhesive](#) (part # 5308027429) on that one.

Spacing Requirements for 2008 Refrigerator in Kitchen Cubby Hole

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Don, in Clinton Township, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Don.

DON

Hello. I'm going to put a [refrigerator](#) in the wall in a cubby hole. What is the clearance on each side that's suggested? Is it fine if there's only an eighth inch on each side?

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a new machine?

DON

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

There should be an instruction or [owner's manual](#) that came with it. And it will tell you for that particular machine what they would like to see as far as clearance goes, not only on the sides, but the top as well. Normally, on the sides, again depending on the machine, you can get away with a pretty small gap. Most of the time they want at least around a half-inch of clearance around the top, and that's just so you can get some air circulating throughout the whole box.

DON

How about an eighth of an inch? Is that feasible?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it depends on what it's going into. If it's just going in between two counters, that might be okay.

DON

No, it's going into a cubby hole.

JOHN SOWDEN

If it's boxed in like that, then you may or may not have issues, depending on which type of [refrigerator](#) you have. Some have got a lot of the condensing tubing running throughout the cabinet, so the cabinet gets pretty warm on the outside, and they'd like you to have a little more airflow around it to dissipate that heat. Others do not and a built-in unit, it really just depends on what you have. So, I would start with the [owner's manual](#) and see if they address that. If they do not then I would call the manufacturer; their help line should be able to tell you, per that model, what they recommend.

DON

I see. There wouldn't be a fire hazard with all of that?

JOHN SOWDEN

As far as a fire hazard, I wouldn't know. I would say it could cause it to run inefficiently, if not cause components to overheat and therefore cause the fridge to conk out.

DON

Oh, okay. Thank you very much.

Whirlpool Top Loading Washing Machine Producing Rust Spots on Clothes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Erika, in Oak Park, has a question on a [washer](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Erika.

ERIKA

I'm calling about a [Whirlpool washer](#). It's a [top loading](#), but it makes rust spots on clothes. You know when I wash the clothes and take them out, it makes rust spots.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Now, have you looked at the inner tub? Are there any spots where the porcelain has worn away from the inner tub?

ERIKA

No. I looked, and there are no worn spots. It's an older model.

JOHN SOWDEN

Do you use bleach often in your washing?

ERIKA

No. Actually I don't use it at all.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, if you can't see anything visible in the inner tank that shows that it's worn away and you're back down to the bare metal on the inner tank the actual rust could be coming from the top of the cabinet. In order to do an inspection of that you're going to have to remove the cabinet, which actually looks a lot worse than it is; we do have the instructions on how to do that on our [website](#). But a lot of times what will happen is the underside of the [main top](#) can start to rust, and then you have small rust particles that will drop down into the tank.

ERIKA

Do you need a service man for that?

JOHN SOWDEN

That depends on your technical abilities. It's not too hard really to get the cabinet off, although you do kind of have to wrestle it off. But you might also, with an inspection there with a flashlight, you might be able to look at the underside with it in place to see if it's obvious. If not, and if you don't feel comfortable disassembling the machine, then yes I'd recommend you have somebody come out and look at it. Even for the price of a service call, all you have to do is ruin one or two really nice sweaters and it's certainly worth the cost of having somebody come out and look at it.

ERIKA

Well, I guess so. I will do that then. Thank you very much for your advice.

2003 Maytag Dryer Making Scratching Noise When Running

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Sue, in Windsor, you're next on the Appliance Repair Show.

SUE

Hi, yes, I have a [Maytag dryer](#), and it's about five years old. When it's running something behind the drum is scratching. I hear it through the whole process of drying, I hear this scratching and [screeching sound](#) and one day I found a little piece of black piping about three inches long among the clothes and I didn't know where it came from. But after that I suppose that has something to do with it. Something got loose, I don't know.

JOHN SOWDEN

So the entire time—

SUE

The entire time, something behind that, you call it the drum, that thing that moves around. It's like a scratching, like a loose something that's constantly floating back there and scratching. It's kind of strange.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you said it's three—

SUE

A small piece of pipe, like a black pipe, about a quarter of an inch in diameter, found with the clothes. I didn't know; the clothes just came from the dryer, I didn't know where it was from.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it sounds like the only thing that would match that description would be the axle that the [rear drum support](#) would ride on. Normally, if that is missing, you're going to have a lot of banging and thumping and probably the drum not even turning at all.

SUE

No, there is no banging or thumping, nothing like that. It's just a little piece of loose, like a paperclip or something in the dryer that just makes a scratchy sound. Everything dries fine, but I always hear that noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

In the back wall of the unit, there's the rear panel and then there's the drum up against it, and there's normally a [seal](#) in there. If it's not making a lot of noise as far as a dragging or a high pitched squeal, which would sound like either a [drum support wheel](#) or possibly the [tension pulley](#) for the [belt](#) was worn out, it's possible that you could have something caught in that [rear felt seal](#) that, as it goes around, is dragging on the rear panel. Things such as paper clips, coins, and even the underwire of certain garments can get caught in there and cause this condition. So, you may want to grab a flashlight and see if there's something stuck in there. If not, if it's stuck on the backside and worked it's way through, you will have to disassemble the unit and pull the drum out to make a physical inspection.

SUE

Right. Where do I look inside with the flashlight again?

JOHN SOWDEN

Towards the rear, between where the rear panel and the rear of the drum mate. There's normally a [felt seal](#) there and if you take and just gently turn the drum manually around, you might be able to pinpoint where it's coming from. If it's coming from one spot as it goes around and it's dragging, then you might find where something's stuck in there.

SUE

Okay. Thank you very much.

2000 Maytag Refrigerator Forming a Water Puddle under the Crisper Drawers

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to Bill, in Lansing, with a question on a [Maytag refrigerator](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show.

BILL

Hi guys. I think you got my [model number](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure. What's the question you have this morning?

BILL

On the [refrigerator](#), below the [fruit and vegetable drawers](#), every day a little bit of a puddle of water develops. We keep wiping it up with towels and we're adjusting those slides that you can do on the front, to the left it says fruit and to the right it says vegetables. Nothing seems to help and we don't know where this water's coming from. It's like a heavy condensation.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often it's coming from the defrost system. What happens is, when the unit goes into defrost and melts the ice and frost off of the cooling coil, it then travels down through a trough that catches it, and then it goes through a series of piping, normally, to a [pan](#) on the underside of your [refrigerator](#), where it then evaporates into the room air. If that is frozen or restricted, that drain water has to go somewhere, and normally it will end up running down either the back wall of the refrigerator section, or at times out the front vents of the [refrigerator](#) as you open the door, and it will start raining in your refrigerator section. So it could be something as simple as a plugged drain, which you will have to, on the particular model that you have, remove the freezer floor to gain access to it which is not much fun to take the doors off and things of that nature.

BILL

I know!

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing is that there is a [damper](#), or an airway where the cold air comes in, and if that's not sealed properly, you can also get some condensation and some other icing and frosting issues. In your particular unit they also have a kit available that's called a [damper insulation kit](#). That's the adjustment where you select the airflow from the freezer to the refrigerator section. There's a little gateway there and there's some insulation around it; if that's not sealed up properly you can get some condensation or some erratic temperature problems. So, you might want to inspect that, and if you get in there and see that there's not the insulation package around it that there should be, install that while you're tearing it apart. If you put the [model](#) you provided me into our [website](#), you'll see a picture of all the common parts for your [refrigerator](#), and it might help in seeing what you have and what it should look like versus what yours does look like.

BILL

Okay. And quickly, I think we bought it in 2000. Are [refrigerators](#) made later than that significantly better?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most are more energy efficient than ones from years past. So yeah, I would say as far as what it's costing you to run the machine, you're probably in better shape than you would be if you had an older unit. As far as better, they're about the same to work on. So I would say better, yes, just from an energy standpoint. As far as lasting longer, it takes twenty years to figure that stuff out.