

## Appliance Repair Show Transcript—June 22, 2008

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### 1999 GE Profile Dishwasher Water in the Bottom after Cycle Completes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We're going to start out with a question on a GE Profile, from Tony in Canton, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Tony. Go ahead, please.

TONY

I have a question regarding a [GE Profile dishwasher](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

TONY

It's about nine years old. After I wash dishes, [water is sitting in the bottom of the dishwasher and it won't drain](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Is it clean water, or dirty water?

TONY

It's after I wash the dishes. The water sits there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. But is the water dirty in the bottom of the tank, or is it clean?

TONY

Oh, it's pretty much clean.

JOHN SOWDEN

Because there's a couple things that can cause standing water after a cycle. One is that the unit is [not draining properly](#). If you run it through the normal cycle, do you hear it fill and drain as it goes through the cycles?

TONY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is your drain a [disposal](#) or an [air gap](#) (part # 300096)?

TONY

It's draining through the disposal.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. It does discharge the water throughout the cycle?

TONY

Yes, because there's a feature on it where you can drain the water in the bottom by pushing a reset button.

JOHN SOWDEN

So the drain is clear, is what I'm driving at here.

TONY

Yes, it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. There are a couple things that can cause you to have water after the cycle is complete. One is the [water inlet valve](#) that lets water into the machine is sticking open periodically and allowing water to trickle in when it should be shutting off and that's why I ask if it's clean or dirty water, because that would be a sign that the [water inlet valve](#) could be leaking. Also, because it's at the end of the cycle when it's acting up, is also when the water might look pretty clean, because obviously if it's draining throughout the cycle, then occasionally you're going to get rid of all the dirty water.

TONY

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But the other thing to inspect is: when it goes into drain, you normally hear a clunking sound, and that's the [solenoid flapper](#) opening up the drain port in the [motor assembly](#). It's possible that is sticking, or at times the solenoid can overheat throughout the cycle and then not open the last few times. Another common problem that you might want to look at is in the back of the unit there's a little grate about two or three inches wide and it runs across the back of the dishwasher. It's a little cover and underneath that, there's a little piston and nut assembly. It's basically a [check valve](#), and that, if it sticks, can cause

the unit to intermittently drain, or to not drain all the time. That just unscrews. If you pull the [lower dish rack](#) out and look at the back, there are two or three [screws](#) that hold down that cover, and then in the center you'll see what looks like a little drain hole and that piston and nut just unscrews. If you unscrew that and look at it, if the mushroom plunger part of that piston assembly is worn or there are parts missing, that also could be your problem.

TONY  
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But from what you're describing, intermittent problems like that are sometimes hard to diagnose. If it's draining sometimes, then I'd say it's either something electrically intermittent, the [water valve](#) leaking through, or in this case I'd start with that piston and nut assembly. If you want to know what it looks like, just go to our website, [RepairClinic.com](#). Get the [model number](#) as it reads off the model tag on the [dishwasher](#) itself and put it into our search box, and you'll see pictures of all the common parts for your unit as well as that piston assembly. That way you'll know what you're looking for.

TONY  
All right. Thank you.

### **Central Air Conditioner Compressor is Hot to Touch**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a central air conditioner compressor, I believe it's Tayyab from Rochester Hills, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Did I pronounce your name right?

TAYYAB  
Yeah. Oh, yeah.

JOHN MCCULLOCH  
Go ahead, please.

TAYYAB  
Okay. I have central air outside, and I was cleaning up all the leaves and things inside before the season starts.

JOHN SOWDEN  
That's what you should do!

TAYYAB  
And I noticed that, I think it's a compressor right, that cylindrical thing?

JOHN SOWDEN  
Yeah.

TAYYAB  
Inside?

JOHN SOWDEN  
Yes.

TAYYAB  
It's covered with a blanket and when I was cleaning it up, I touched that thing and it was very hot. So I was kind of wondering, all winter, I didn't run A/C or anything like that, so why should it be so hot?

JOHN SOWDEN  
Is this a central air unit or is this a heat pump?

TAYYAB  
No, it's a regular central air conditioning.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Okay.

TAYYAB  
No, I don't have a heat pump.

JOHN SOWDEN  
From what you're describing, it sounds like it's a crank case heater that may have been installed on the compressor. The reason I ask is, if it's a heat pump if you run them sometimes in the winter, that's to keep the oil thinned out in the compressor assembly. So as far as that goes, I'd actually have to see what kind of air conditioner you have, the brand, etc. but to insulate that is not abnormal. It really depends on the unit.

TAYYAB  
It was pretty hot! You know, you touch it and you feel it!

JOHN SOWDEN  
Was the unit running at the time?

TAYYAB  
No, no!

JOHN SOWDEN  
Okay. That would lead me to believe that there's some kind of heater installed on that.

TAYYAB  
And next to it there was a small cylinder. I don't know what that is. It wasn't covered by a blanket.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's probably what they call an accumulator. It's like an old toilet tank bulb?

TAYYAB

Uh-huh.

JOHN SOWDEN

What that does is when the liquid refrigerant comes back to the compressor, it gives it a place to expand and evaporate all of the existing refrigerant so you're not running liquid refrigerant into your unit. But as far as the cover goes, it sounds like what you have is some sort of heater on there. Rather it was installed after market, or if it was part of production, again, there are so many brands...

TAYYAB

You mean inside, that compressor?

JOHN SOWDEN

Actually, you say it's external. There could be a crank case heater that's covered, or it could just be insulating the compressor for whatever reason. It's possible to help evaporate. You certainly want it to be able to cool, but it just really depends on the unit and its design. If you have any other questions whatsoever, I'd call somebody out and see what they think about it. If it's a heater that's not required for your application, then I'd disable it; it's probably costing you money, since it's something that's generating heat. Does the air conditioner work?

TAYYAB

Oh, yeah! But I just touched it and it was so hot, so I thought, wait a minute here! In the winter, I didn't use it or anything like that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, and again it depends on the unit, what they have in there. Once the temperature drops it's meant to keep the temperature up on the compressor itself.

TAYYAB

And it has this round clamp that was kind of...

JOHN SOWDEN

All the way around the bottom of the compressor?

TAYYAB

Yeah!

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a crank case heater. All around that clamp is a heater. It heats up the oil in the bottom of the compressor to keep it thin so that the compressor can start, normally in colder temperatures. So that's why I asked if it was a heat pump application.

TAYYAB

That heat clamp was sitting on the ground or floor. So what I did, I raised it a little bit and put it around the compressor cylinder and tightened it up.

JOHN SOWDEN

Again, that's something where it depends on the application. A crank case heater is used in a lot of commercial units and things of that nature to run year round. Now, why yours was lying on the ground next to the compressor, it's hard to say. Have you had this unit since it was new?

TAYYAB

Oh, maybe because in the furnace unit, that went out, so they installed a new one there two years ago.

JOHN SOWDEN

A new furnace?

TAYYAB

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

But they kept the old air conditioning system?

TAYYAB

Yes. So maybe they recharged the system or something, maybe they went outside, you know what I mean?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would say there's probably something that's been done, if parts have been disconnected. At this point, being early in the season, I'd have somebody come out and have a look at it and see if you need to actually have that in the circuit. If it's not required then you could save enough money in energy over the next couple of months to pay for a service call. It sounds like people have been working on it and doing things, so I would have somebody just make sure that everything's up to snuff.

TAYYAB

You know the grid that goes around the condenser or whatever?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

TAYYAB

The timer, I think... I see some rust around there.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's normal.

TAYYAB

Can I take it out and repaint it or something?

JOHN SOWDEN

If you wish, you can disassemble the whole outer shell there and take the covering grid out and clean it up and repaint it. I don't necessarily recommend that, because there's a series of screws around the perimeter; as you take them out you want to label where each screw goes, because some may be longer than the others, and if you put a screw that's too long for what's designed to be in there you can puncture some tubing in there.

TAYYAB

So, there are just some screws around the perimeter that I can take out and then the grid will come out then? The top doesn't have to come out, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally, the top would have to come off to get the grid off and it really depends on what kind of air conditioner you have; what brand, all that good stuff, as far as disassembly is concerned. But normally, there's just a series of screws around the perimeter of it. You do remove the top, and you certainly need to turn the power off to the unit before you start doing stuff like that. But the problem is, when you start messing around with that, if you drop the top or do something to it, the tubing is pretty thin on those things. So if you spring a leak, it's going to be time for a new condenser.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Be careful when you do it, and we thank you very much for the call. Good luck to you.

## **2008 Maytag Dishwasher Doesn't Dry the Dishes Well Without Rinse Aid**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we go now to Rita, in West Bloomfield, for a question on a [Maytag dishwasher](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Rita.

RITA

Yes, good morning. I have a question about a [dishwasher](#) I've recently purchased, a Maytag. I have the [model number](#). I don't know if this is common to Maytag's or to other dishwashers, that [don't dry completely](#). When I look in the [manual](#), it says that you have to use rinse aid that it will help the drying but the dishes are still pretty wet without the rinse aid, and I don't like using those. Is this common to all dishwashers these days? Is there a way to get around this situation?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, is this a plastic tub unit?

RITA

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, basically there are a lot of things that come into play when it comes to [dishwashers](#) and their drying times these days. A lot of them incorporate [fan motors](#) and things to circulate air through the machine. The plastic tubs, obviously they can't heat up as well as a stainless steel tank could; you don't really need to. Most often, the units will dry pretty well. It depends on what things you're having problems with. If they're plastic cups or things of that nature—

RITA

No, it's everything! And it remains pretty wet on the inside, even after a couple of days.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Well, sometimes—

RITA

And I use the heat dry and high temperature.

JOHN SOWDEN

And does it seem to be working? Do you see steam coming out and it seems warm inside the [dishwasher](#)?

RITA

I believe so.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, I would start by going with the manufacturer's recommended operation, which is to put some Jet Dry in there, because that helps sheet the water on the last rinse and allows the stuff to drip dry. Especially on the newer machines, in order to achieve a lot of the energy ratings that they have on appliances these days, they have to give up something. On [dishwashers](#) of twenty years ago, they would just kind of bake the dishes dry and today they don't have that option. So, there are a lot of things that they do as far as air circulation; the [heater](#) does come on and pulses for periods of time to put heat in the unit. Some of the old dishwashers had a plate warming option where it would actually heat your plates up. Obviously with all of the energy star stuff these days they're doing all they can to use the least amount of energy.

RITA

Are they using lower temperatures?

JOHN SOWDEN

They sometimes use lower temperatures, and they also don't keep the [heater](#) on for the entire dry cycle. They'll turn it on and off. These are all tested and generally get good results but they also want you to use the Jet Dry.

RITA

Isn't the Jet Dry...haven't there been some problems with that? I'm also concerned about the residual chemicals on the dishes and things like that. But haven't there been some problems with fires or overheating or something like that, as I recall? Or am I mistaken on this?

JOHN SOWDEN

I think what you're referring to is there was a brand out that had some wiring harness issues, that the [rinse agent dispenser](#) was leaking at times, and was leaking onto the wiring harness but it had nothing to do with Jet Dry being an acid or anything like that to eat through the wiring; it was just basically a misrouting of the wiring harness and they found that a lot of moisture in this one area was causing a lot of the wires to heat up. So it was more of a design failure rather than a Jet Dry problem.

RITA

So this is common to not just this [Maytag](#) brand, but also a lot of other brands?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure. Almost all of them will recommend that you use Jet Dry. Most will come with a sample of it in the [dishwasher](#).

RITA

Right, right.

JOHN SOWDEN

They want you to use it because that's what it's made for, to sheet the water off for your last rinse.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

The government is in your kitchen and your laundry and your bathroom...

JOHN SOWDEN

Don't get John started on this!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

They're everywhere!

RITA

Thank you.

JOHN SOWDEN

Use it and see what happens. I think you'll get better results.

## 2003 Broan Range Hood Exhaust Fan Switch Not Working

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we're going to go now to a question on an [exhaust fan](#) from Carol, in Riverview, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Carol! Go ahead, please.

FRANK

Hello, this is Carol's husband Frank calling in about the exhaust fan. We have a [Broan exhaust fan](#) over the stove and it has a [switch](#) that works automatically. If you pull the hood out, the [light](#) and the fan come on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

FRANK

However, at this point they're not working. I've checked the [switch](#) and the switch seems to be all right. I just don't know to whom to go to get this repaired.

JOHN SOWDEN

How old is the machine?

FRANK

It's about five years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And when you say you slide out the...

FRANK

Yeah, you slide the hood out—

JOHN SOWDEN

And then it hits a [switch](#) that then turns it on and it becomes operational.

FRANK

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, one thing you might want to look at is, anything that moves back and forth like that, and if the switch does seem to check out all right, you could have a broken wire somewhere just due to the back and forth motion.

FRANK

I see.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are a lot of older [stoves](#) that had the same thing where you pull the drawer out and it turns on. Over time, you can develop some broken wires. It's not really common, but if the [switch](#) is good and you're sure you have power to the unit, that's where I would start.

FRANK

Right, because I can turn the [light](#) on manually but I can't turn the [fan](#) on manually.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay... This unit's got a [circuit board](#) in there, or is it a series of [switches](#)?

FRANK

Yeah, I think there is a circuit board.

JOHN SOWDEN

That may be your problem as well, either an intermittent [circuit board](#), or again, just a loose connection on that. So, I would start by making sure all the connections are secure on the board. As far as service goes, I'd call Broan and ask who the warranty servicer in your area is. That's always the way to go.

FRANK

I've called them, but their closest guy is out in Sylvan Lake and we're quite a ways away. He won't come out this way.

JOHN SOWDEN

Then I'd call him back and tell him, fine, give me somebody else! This sounds like it's one of their high end units, so I think they'd want to work with you. I certainly can't speak for them, but normally if you get the factory involved, they'll try to help you out.

FRANK

All right. Thank you very much.

### **GE Side by Side Refrigerator Importance of Replacing the Water Filter**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Jean, in Farmington, wants to know about a [GE side by side](#) refrigerator's [water filter](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Jean, go ahead please.

JEAN

I was just wondering how important it is to replace these filters on the [refrigerator](#) when the little yellow light goes on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it really depends on how clean of water you want to drink! A lot of the problems arise because some people don't even know that the refrigerator has a [filter](#), especially the ones that are either tucked down in the kick panel or the upper right hand corner of the refrigerator, so what happens is somebody moves into a new house and they have this

[refrigerator](#) there and they don't even know that they have a water filtration system for their machine. So most today will have a light that comes on, as you described, and what they do is they either measure the flow of water through the water lines, or more commonly what they'll do is they will monitor how many times the [ice maker](#) fills as well as how many times the water handle is actuated as you push in to get a glass of water. So they figure, so many seconds of activation of the [water valves](#), so many gallons through the [filter](#), and then from there that means it's time to change it. There are two things you can do. You can replace the filter, which if you use it a lot, most filters are between thirty and fifty dollars, and you get roughly between four and six hundred gallons, or about every six months to a year, depending on usage. It's a nice feature to have. If you do not replace it, it's possible that over time you'll restrict the [water filter](#) to a point where you might run into problems where the [ice maker](#) doesn't fill properly or the ice maker [water valve](#) can stick open and overflow. So, I'd recommend replacing it. If you do not want to use that feature anymore, for most units you can purchase a plug, where you take out the [water filter](#) and in the factory they have a plug available; they're about half the cost of a filter. You can put a bypass plug in there and just have normal water. Or you can filter it somewhere else in your house, if you have a whole house water filter system. But I'd recommend replacing it just because the nice filtered water is a feature that you paid more to have when you got your [refrigerator](#).

JEAN

I see. All right. Thank you very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you go to our [website](#) and put the [model number](#) of your unit in, you can have [filters](#) shipped right to your door. You can also visit our [accessories section](#) and go from there. Also on the filter itself, there's normally a part number that you can put into our [website](#) and find it that way.

JEAN

Mm-hmm. I went to Home Depot and bought my second one for forty dollars. Then the person that helped me that day said that if I didn't want to replace it, all I had to do was just reset that button and it would go off!

JOHN SOWDEN

You can reset it, but again, you're eventually going to plug that [filter](#) up, and it all depends on what kind of water is coming into the machine.

JEAN

Well, if it's just regular city water, do you think it needs that type of filtering?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a really good question! That's a question that one person would tell you, certainly yes! There are other people that would tell you it's no big deal and they've been drinking it for forty years. There are a lot of things in water, and it's generally safe, but there is

chlorine and stuff like that. I know many years ago there was one county that had as much chlorine in their water as some swimming pools did!

JEAN  
Oh!

JOHN SOWDEN

It really depends on where you live and the quality of the water there. Most people, with all the stuff in water today, like to take the extra precaution and it makes for nice ice cubes and drinking water, especially in the summer. But if you want to bypass it, you can force it to work with the [filter](#) you have in there; but so that you don't encounter other problems, I'd just put a bypass plug in there.

JEAN  
All right. Thank you very much.

### **2003 Kenmore Freestanding Under the Counter Refrigerator Freezing Food**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, here with a question on a [Kenmore mini-fridge](#), Joe in Northville, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Joe.

JOE

This fridge is small; I use it as an under bar refrigerator. It does not have a little [ice maker](#) on top like some of them do. It's just a four point four cube. It is a stand alone. I know there's probably not enough air circulation around it but for five years I've had it, and there's never been a problem. All of a sudden out of the clear blue, [everything froze in it](#) and when I say froze, I mean frozen solid!

JOHN SOWDEN  
Okay.

JOE

What I did was I pulled it out so that it had better air circulation. On three sides there was maybe an inch to an inch and a half gap around it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Now, are there a [fan](#) and a condenser underneath this? Is this a forced air condenser? Or is it all self-contained?

JOE

No, it would be all self-contained. It doesn't vent out the front like a built-in style. They call it a stand alone. So I cleaned out the back, I read the instructions in the [manual](#) and I cleaned it out. Obviously there's no troubleshooting in there. So, I made sure everything was clean back there, pulled it out a few more inches, and it worked fine for maybe two or three weeks but all I did was put water in there. I didn't have beer and things like that

in there and it froze solid just like it was a deep freeze. It did it again! At that point I called [Kenmore](#), and of course they'll send someone out or I could bring it to one of their service places but it's like an eighty-five dollar charge! It's five years old and it cost a hundred and fifty dollars. If it was something small, I may even be able to go onto your [website](#) and attempt to repair it myself, but it's not worth a service call.

JOHN SOWDEN

No. That's unfortunate. A problem with a lot of appliances today is that the cost of repair versus replacement is such that a lot of stuff is throw away these days. What you have is probably one of two situations. The one is, the [thermostat](#) is sticking periodically and causing the unit to run and freeze things intermittently.

JOE

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing is, you could have a leak in the system. What happens at that point is the refrigerator will run, and if the [thermostat](#) is mounted to the cooling coil, which is true of a lot of the under counter units, what happens is the thermostat sensing bulb is mounted to the evaporator in the [refrigerator](#), and they usually monitor the last pass of the evaporator to get a temperature and shut it off. If you have a leak, what you have is a half or a two thirds, three quarters frost pattern on that coil, but not enough to actuate, or turn off, the thermostat sensing bulb. So what happens is it runs and it runs and it actually freezes things, but since it's sensing an evaporator temperature instead of an air temperature, it's going to run virtually forever. I would start it up and see if the cooling coil gets a nice firm frost pattern, complete. If you notice part of it's freezing and part of it's not, then the problem might be that the [thermostat](#) is sensing properly, but you've got a small leak. Eventually what happens on a refrigerator only system is, a leak will develop, it will freeze everything for a while, and then of course it will get to a point where it won't cool very well and it will conk out.

JOE

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

But as far as that goes, a [thermostat](#) is probably fifty bucks if you try it yourself and if it's a leak, it's a throw away anyway. So, you might just want to monitor it and see, maybe take a chance on a thermostat, but it's one of those things unfortunately that's not worth putting a lot of money into.

JOE

Yeah, absolutely.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sorry if I've been of no help today, but it's one of two things and they both don't look good!

## 2006 GE Profile Bottom Mount Refrigerator Ice Maker Not Working

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Listening on the web in Florida, Fred having a [GE freezer](#) problem, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Fred, go ahead please.

FRED

Hi. I've got a year and a half old GE Profile with the [bottom freezer](#). It's got an ice maker down there. It hasn't been working and when you touch the outside of the unit, just outside the door on the left hand side where the [ice maker](#) is, it's a little warm.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is the unit otherwise okay? You know what temperatures you have in your refrigerator and freezer section?

FRED

I usually keep it around zero and thirty seven.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And that's what you do have, or that's what the board says it is?

FRED

Well, I keep it there but the freezer kind of goes up. Like right now it's at three.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well that's still plenty cold enough. You say that the ice maker is warm, or the refrigerator on the side where the [ice maker](#) is located is warm?

FRED

On that side.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. That's not necessarily abnormal. There are some lines that run through the cabinet, condenser lines, which are warm; especially with the heat outside, being warm to the touch is not a problem. Now, did this [ice maker quit all of a sudden](#), or did you just start getting low ice production?

FRED

I didn't see low ice production. It just kind of stopped.

JOHN SOWDEN

On this particular one, there's a switch on the [ice maker](#). Is that in the "on" position?

FRED

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And is there a green light showing? Normally there's a little light that shows on there. These [ice makers](#) are actually a non-serviceable item. I don't think they even sell parts to be replaced internally—you just get a new ice maker. So basically, if the ice maker is plugged in and you have power to it and it's not working, it's time for a new ice maker. Now, the one thing you want to inspect is, make sure you don't have a plugged [water inlet tube](#), or that the unit's trying to fill but it can't get water into the ice maker because you've got an ice buildup in the water tube.

FRED

Where would that be?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's the plastic tube that goes into the back of the [ice maker](#), where the water comes in. Just inspect that. You can normally take out the icemaker just by removing a couple of [screws](#) and unplugging the wiring harness. They have a quick disconnect plug on them. Look up inside that [fill tube](#) and see if you see any ice. You can take a long bladed [screwdriver](#) (part # 32477-12) and gently insert it up side that tube and see if it goes in as far as the depth of the refrigerator. Make sure there's no ice buildup. Being a year and a half years old, you may want to get a hold of the manufacturer and see what if anything they will do for you to help with this.

FRED

You say there's a green light on the inside?

JOHN SOWDEN

On the [ice maker](#), normally there's a switch; some of them will have a light on it that displays to indicate that everything is operational.

FRED

Oh, okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

It depends on which generation you have. If you have power to the [ice maker](#) and it's not working, the ice maker is a throw away item.

FRED

Okay. Thank you very much!