

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—August 17, 2008

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1987 Maytag Washing Machine Doesn't Spin and Water is Leaking Out

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's start things out with a [washing machine](#) question from Barbara, in Troy, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Barbara, go ahead please.

BARBARA

My [Maytag](#) is twenty-one years old and it decided [it wouldn't spin](#) out this past Thursday and so I just had to let it sit. I just had eye surgery and didn't want to fool around with it. Should I give up?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, does it wash and not spin?

BARBARA

Yes, it did wash, but it didn't spin out.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Did you try lifting the lid and re-setting it?

BARBARA

Yes, it went through the whole cycle and it just would not spin and all the [water is leaking out](#), the drain is right in front of it. With this eye surgery, I didn't want to fool around with it, so I just let it drain.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you're saying that the washer is leaking as well?

BARBARA

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you put it to spin, is it making any strange noises or anything like that? Or is it just dead?

BARBARA

It makes a noise, but nothing happens.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, it sounds like there are a few things that can be causing it. If it's making a noise, that's normally the [motor](#) trying to start.

BARBARA

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be that the motor has failed. It could be the [timer](#) is not sending the proper voltage to the motor and/or at times you can get small garments caught in the [pump](#) of that unit.

BARBARA

This was just full of washcloths and small towels. It was a small load.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, and so sometimes some of those small items can get stuck in the pump, which causes the [pump](#) to be unable to turn. At times, the [motor](#) will start and sometimes it won't, it depends on the tension of the [belt](#) itself. Being twenty-one years old, you know it's got some miles on it. If it were something fairly simple, it would be worth having somebody to come out and give you a prognosis on it but overall, from what you're describing, it's probably something in the larger repair bill area. Normally it's a motor, or it's possible that the [tub bearing](#) is gone and so basically it's trying to turn but the bearing has seized up, which after twenty years is not an abnormal thing. So, I wouldn't have high expectations. You might want to start looking at a new [washing machine](#).

BARBARA

Any suggestions for something? I'm alone and eighty years old, so I don't do much washing.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, I always recommend Consumer Reports. If you look inside one of their magazines, you won't find any advertising! So, they're not biased, or seem not to be from what I've seen. The other thing to consider is, is this an upstairs or a downstairs laundry situation?

BARBARA

I have a tri-level, so it's down in the utility room.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. So it's something that you may want to get upstairs, make it a little easier on yourself if it's possible.

BARBARA

I'll look at the Consumer Reports. I'll go to the library and see what I can find.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. It doesn't sound good, from what you're describing. It's normally something on the hundred plus dollar repair bill, and given that it's twenty some years old, even though that machine is well built and you can probably get some more miles out of it, you might want to start looking at a new one. A new one is going to be more energy efficient as well.

BARBARA

I believe it! Thanks so much for your help. I love your program. I listen to it every Sunday before I go to church.

2000 Kenmore 80 Series Gas Dryer is Tumbling but Not Heating

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Bill, in Grand Blanc, has a problem with a [gas dryer](#) this morning, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi, Bill.

BILL

I have a Kenmore 80 Series, it's about eight years old and [it just quit heating](#). It still tumbles. I opened the trap door on the bottom and I don't see any flame or any type of heat, or anything. It just continues to tumble and that's it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. It tumbles, no heat, and you removed the [lower panel](#) and you've observed the [gas valve](#) area and you see nothing.

BILL

Right. Nothing.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, normally the sequence of operation for that is, you would see the [igniter](#) glow bright red and then you'll hear a click which is the [light sensor](#) sensing the heat light from that area, and then the [gas valve coils](#) will actuate and open up the gas valve.

BILL

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, because you're seeing nothing, I would think that you could have a problem with either a broken [igniter](#), or the components that feed the circuit to the igniter have failed. Each dryer is a little bit different but there is normally at least one, if not two [thermostats](#), that have to be closed in order to send the signal to the [gas valve](#).

BILL

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

There's the [control thermostat](#) and then the [high limit thermostat](#), and then on a lot of units they have what they all a [thermal fuse](#), which if the unit overheats it will either turn off the dryer completely or turn off the heat portion of the dryer, depending on how it's wired.

BILL

It won't reset itself?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, it's a one time fuse. Normally, that's mounted on the back of the unit; when you remove the back panel you'll see where the thermostats and the thermal fuse are located. How long is the [vent](#) on this?

BILL

How long is the vent? It's probably about six feet.

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, okay. So it's not too bad. I would still recommend inspecting and cleaning that while you're getting into it. As far as what the components look like, if you get the [model number](#) as it reads off the appliance itself, go to [RepairClinic.com](#) and put it in our search box, you'll see a picture of all the common components for your dryer, so you'll know what the [thermal fuse](#) looks like, so when you go hunting for it you'll know what to do.

BILL

Okay. And can I tell from the exterior of the fuse whether it's burnt?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, it's not like the old glass fuses where they discolor. You can check it with an [ohmmeter](#) (part # DM10T) or you can, if you've got a jump lead, you can just jump across the two terminals.

BILL

I see. Eliminate it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Eliminate it for testing purposes only. I don't recommend you run it without that because it's there for a reason. Normally, there's something that causes it to trip, like a plugged up [blower housing](#) or [vent](#), or one or the other [thermostats](#) is sticking and that's the fail safe.

BILL

Okay. If it's the thermal, will I be able to tell if it's the [igniter](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if all the thermostats check out, then you can check the igniter with an [ohmmeter](#) (part # DM10T). Normally, you'll see a small burn or crack in it. The easiest way to check, if you're comfortable working with electricity, is to see if you're getting 110 volts to the gas valve plug, but I don't recommend live voltage checks unless you're comfortable and/or versed in that. That's cutting the system in half by saying now I have power to the [gas valve](#), so I know the problem lies within my igniter/light sensor area. If not, then you're working backwards.

BILL

But if I see a burn spot on the igniter, then that would be it?

JOHN SOWDEN

That would be it.

BILL

Okay. I'll get into it. Thank you sir.

2005 Kenmore Top Mount Refrigerator has Frost and Ice Buildup in the Freezer

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, here with a question on a [Kenmore refrigerator](#), Gary, on the Appliance Repair Show.

GARY

I've got a Kenmore [refrigerator with the freezer on top](#) and it frosts over all the time. You open it up right now and [there's frost everywhere](#), like maybe it's not going through a defrost. Obviously, I don't know.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a [separate freezer](#) or a refrigerator freezer?

GARY

This is a refrigerator freezer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and the problem you're having is in the freezer section, you're getting a lot of frost?

GARY

Frost is everywhere and the [ice cube trays](#) (part # 61002140) sometimes even, I wouldn't say icicles, but little balls of ice, like it's gone through a thaw cycle and then refrozen but there's frost everywhere.

JOHN SOWDEN

And this is a self-defrosting unit?

GARY

Yeah. I believe it's supposed to be! It's about three years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, otherwise the temperatures are okay? You're not losing any food?

GARY

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, normally a lot of ice and frost inside the unit, especially on the interior, is from a door leak or a cabinet leak, where you're getting hot moist air inside. So, I would inspect the [door seals](#); make sure the doors are closing properly. This can be an intermittent thing where sometimes even putting orange juice cans in the door, if you slam the door they hit the rail and bounce back and then the door is ajar. So I would kind of make sure that the door is closed and that the door seals are sealing all the way around the cabinet. It doesn't take a very big leak, especially as hot as it's been, to get a lot of ice and frost buildup. If you're getting [ice and frost buildup](#) on the back wall or the floor, depending on where the cooling coil or evaporator is at, then I would suspect that you have a problem with the defrost system. Normally with a defrost system failure, within a week's time you'll start to lose temperature in the unit, because you're not getting any air to pass through the evaporator coil. So from what you're describing, I would look more for a cabinet leak or a door leak, and I say cabinet leak because it could be in the door or where the tubing for the refrigerant lines and all the things go into the cabinet; there's normally a seal around there, it's made of silly putty type stuff, and it's possible that—

GARY

Is that on the back of the unit?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, where the lines go in. That could be where the problem lies, is that insulation has fallen off or has become dislodged and you're getting some hot air into the cabinet.

GARY

Yeah. Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But I'd inspect all the doors, especially the freezer, and your refrigerator as well, and make sure that's not the case.

GARY

We've made sure that areas, like the cycle where it starts a defreeze or it goes down into the [refrigerator](#), made sure the vents in the freezer are clear, so nothing's blocking it. That was one of the troubleshooting techniques I read about, if it's blocked then the air isn't circulating like it should. We've done all those things and that seemed to help a little bit for one day, or maybe even a couple cycles. It all disappeared, but the next day it was all back! How do you check the [seals](#)? Can you take a piece of paper, visually look at them, and crumbs or something in that accordion like seal.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would just make a visual inspection and make sure they're sealing well. They have what they call the dollar bill test, where they can close on a dollar bill. You're just looking for a little bit of resistance, because all those are is a piece of plastic with a magnet around the frame, and the magnet is what holds it in against the door. So any wrinkles or any small gaps, you can take a hairdryer and gently go over that area and loosen up the plastic, and then the magnet will then pull against the door frame. So, I'd start there and see what's going on. If you start losing temperature then I would lean more towards a defrost system failure.

2005 Kenmore Top Mount Refrigerator Framing around Glass Shelves Keeps Cracking

GARY

Okay. Now for spare parts, do you have replacement [shelves](#)? We have some of the shelves where there's sort of a picture frame with a glass insert in the plastic. While it was under warranty, they replaced about six of them.

JOHN SOWDEN

Wow!

GARY

But now a couple of other ones have cracked. Do you handle those kinds of things?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure do. Just get the [model number](#) off of the unit that you have, and then go to our [website](#). If for some reason you can't find what you're looking for, you can always give us a call at our 800 number, which is 1-888-343-4948, and we're open 8AM to midnight seven days a week.

GARY

All right. Pretty good!

JOHN SOWDEN

You say you have several broken [glass shelves](#)?

GARY

Not the glass shelves. The picture frame around them keeps cracking, and then there's one in particular, the one where the [drawer](#) comes out.

JOHN SOWDEN

The carriage for it, yes.

GARY

That one has cracked three times, so I try not to put like milk on that side, or whatever. But yeah, they covered for the two years and I tried to follow up and find out if this was a recall issue. Obviously it is, and it's just the wife and I so it's not like it's overloaded, and it's a seventeen and a half or eighteen cubic foot size. It's mostly empty but they still seem to crack. So it's been an ongoing problem, and then trying to go through the manufacturer, this is manufactured by [Whirlpool](#) or [General Electric](#), but calling them, they say, oh, well it's built to Kenmore's specifications, so if you have any issues, go back to them.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

GARY

That was a vicious circle!

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, what happens is [Kenmore](#) will buy them from the manufacturer as is and then they provide their own warranty, so yes you are buying it as their appliance. So whoever made it did it for their specs and anything after that is Kenmore's responsibility.

1998 Whirlpool Refrigerator Ice Maker Overflowing

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll start now this segment with a [Whirlpool ice maker](#) question from Paul, in Sterling Heights, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Paul.

PAUL

Yeah, I've got an [ice maker](#) and the water won't shut off. It keeps pouring in the [container for the ice](#) and into the refrigerator and comes out on the floor.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well that's not good!

PAUL

I know it isn't!

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, did you turn the water off to the unit?

PAUL

I did now, yeah. I took the unit out.

JOHN SOWDEN

You took the ice maker out?

PAUL

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

PAUL

I've got the water shut off. I was just wondering if this was a repairable item?

JOHN SOWDEN

When you took the [ice maker](#) out, did it still fill? Did it continue to fill after you took the ice maker out?

PAUL

Oh, no! I had the water shut off in the basement.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. There are two things that generally can cause this: The [water valve](#) itself, the component in the back of the refrigerator that the household water is connected to, that's sticking open physically, or the [ice maker](#) itself is stuck and sending a signal or voltage to that ice maker water valve, and saying, "fill". So, it's either an electrical or mechanical problem.

PAUL

How would I check that valve?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the easiest way to do it is, if you turn the water back on, and the water continues to come in, and the ice maker is removed, you know it's not the ice maker.

PAUL

Okay. Yeah!

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, if you put it all back together and it seems to be working okay, if you go to our website, RepairClinic.com, we do have information on how to test cycle the [ice maker](#).

PAUL
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN
It's generally one or the other. How old is this machine?

PAUL
Oh, it's got to be ten years old. It came with the refrigerator from Whirlpool.

JOHN SOWDEN
Right and if push comes to shove you could just replace it. You can normally get a new ice maker install kit, which comes with a new [ice maker](#) and a [water valve](#), so you can just carpet bomb the whole problem and just replace all the components and that way you're done. But as far as being terminal, a new ice maker is normally between eighty and one hundred and twenty dollars; a new water valve's around forty or fifty dollars, again depending on the unit. Normally, those kits aren't much more than the cost of an ice maker itself, and you get everything new, so it's not a bad idea to go that route if you're still unsure.

PAUL
Yeah, right. Well, I'm glad you told me how to check that [water valve](#) itself. I didn't think about that. I'll try that first. Thank you very much, sir!

Ice Maker Overflowed but Works Again After Water was Shut Off and Then Turned Back On

JOHN MCCULLOCH
And here's another question on an [ice maker](#) from John, in Shelby Township, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, John.

JOHN
Hi. Well, listening to your last caller, you just about answered my question.

JOHN SOWDEN
I was just going to ask if you were paying attention, because I saw this on the screen and I thought it looks like he has got the same problem as the last gentleman did.

JOHN
Well, I do and that's exactly what happened in mine. We were sitting in the kitchen, and the [ice maker](#) cycled and all of a sudden I could hear water running in the freezer unit and it ran out on the floor. Of course, I shut the water down. I am familiar with the [solenoids](#) in the back and basically what makes this thing work. So, the next day I rolled out the refrigerator and I located the solenoid and looked at it. It seemed like everything was all right so I hooked it all back up again, and it hasn't misfired since.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay...

JOHN

Now, of course, I don't trust it!

JOHN SOWDEN

No, you don't want to go on vacation and have this happen!

JOHN

So, we put the lever up at night or when we go out, so it's working and we have ice. Now it's been working for about four weeks now and I'm just thinking that maybe something got stuck in the [solenoid](#) plunger itself, because we were up north a few weeks ago and the lady's [dishwasher](#) overflowed. There I took the solenoid out and completely took it apart and put it back together again and everything was fine.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. All it has to do is stick once though and it's a mess. Now, one thing to consider, the water shutoff you have for your unit, is this one of those [self-tapping valves](#) (part # 5305510264) on the plumbing downstairs? It's got the little—

JOHN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, is it a self-piercing, or is it just a shutoff valve? Does it poke a hole in the pipe when you mount it?

JOHN

It appears to be a self-piercing one. I didn't put it in; it was there when we bought the house.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. That might be your problem. See, the [water valve](#) itself needs about eighteen pounds of pressure at all times in order to help seat that valve, and those self-piercing valves, what happens is you mount them to your pipe and you turn the handle, and it pokes a hole about the size of a pencil lead into your pipe. Over time, that can get restricted due to sediment in the water and just rust, things of that nature. So what happens is you've reduced the amount of water flow to your valve and then when you go downstairs and turn the water off, you've basically cleared that hole out again by reseating that needle.

JOHN

You know, that makes a whole lot of sense because when I first tried to close the valve by hand, I couldn't! I had to take a pair of pliers and twist it a bit to get it free, and now it's very free.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah and that's more than likely what happened. As far as the type of valve that you have there, they make another style called a [drill style](#) (part # 5305519684), and what you do is you drill, I think it's a three-sixteenths or a quarter-inch hole, and then the shutoff is basically just a clamp with a shutoff and there's no self-piercing center. What they do is, it uses that hole in the pipe instead of the small pencil-sized hole; you're almost up to a quarter-inch hole. It looks similar to the one you have but it works much better, it gets much better water pressure to it and it has less chance of plugging up over time.

JOHN

Well, being the handyman that I am, with your answer I'm going to go down there and put a real shutoff valve on there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that's the best way to do it.

JOHN

I don't like those self-piercing ones. I just don't like them! To me, the extra money and the extra little bit of work, you put one in that's real.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, and it's something that when you install an [ice maker](#), you go downstairs and it works fine but years later, and again it depends on your plumbing, they become restricted and then you end up with the problem you have. Fortunately, you were home when this happened, because sometimes—

JOHN

You'd better believe it!

JOHN SOWDEN

I've opened up [refrigerators](#) that are half full of frozen ice, all the way to the door when this stuff starts occurring.

JOHN

And the water came through there pretty quickly! I was amazed at how much water was coming out! So, there seems to be a lot of water pressure there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. All that has to happen is, the valve doesn't seat once. If the [ice maker](#) is cycling now, then normally it's a problem in the valve and not necessarily the ice maker, although it can be...

JOHN

Well, the other question I have is, is it possible that maybe one of the cubes of ice stuck somewhere and stopped it from cycling?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's possible. You see different size cubes instead of having nice uniform cubes you'll find a sliver of one in the [bucket](#).

JOHN

They were all the same and it's been working fine. I've been keeping a close eye on it now, obviously.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. I'd say if you change the water shutoff, you might even want to change the [water inlet valve](#), just to be sure. Then that way you can go on vacation!

JOHN

All right! Thank you very much.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Do you sell both of those at the website, [RepairClinic.com](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure do!

Jenn Air Side by Side Refrigerator Freezer Doesn't Defrost Even After Defrost Heater Replacement

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, here with a question on a [side by side refrigerator](#), Lou in Macomb, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Lou, go ahead please.

LOU

Hey, listen, I have a side by side [Jenn-Air](#), the freezer freezes up. It's been doing that, so I unplugged it, manually defrosted it several times...

JOHN SOWDEN

It works fine for a week or two and then starts having problems again?

LOU

Yeah. So then I replaced the defrost part, the thermostat defroster coil part, and I'm still having the same problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

You replaced the [defrost thermostat](#) or the [defrost heaters](#)?

LOU

The coil, the single coil piece. The one that's behind the wall on the freezer side and I'm still having the same problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. This is a [side by side](#)?

LOU

Side by side Jenn-Air, yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and you replaced, you removed the freezer wall and you replaced the [defrost heaters](#)?

LOU

It was the heater, yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

And there's a glass tube and the coils are inside it, is that the style you have?

LOU

I didn't see any glass tube. It looked like a coil kind of a thing, like a U-shaped coil.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. That's a defrost heater. Now, there are two other components in your defrost system that could be causing this: the [defrost thermostat](#), that's the small disk that is wired in a series with your defrost heater. It's about the size of a quarter. It looks like about three or four life savers together as far as the size and depth of it. The other one would be the [defrost timer](#), and/or some of them have a circuit board for that, which is called an [adaptive defrost control](#). That's what tells it to go into defrost. Either one of those two items failing can cause the situation you have, where it's not defrosting on its own.

LOU

Okay. Are these replaceable as well?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. The circuit board is normally either down on the underside of the unit, down there in the compressor area, or in the control area as well, where your [thermostat](#) is in the refrigerator. The defrost thermostat is mounted right in there next to the top of the evaporator coil where you replace the defrost heater, which you've already got in there. One way to check that one is when it's all iced over, it depends again on your unit, but if you've got a timer you can just manually advance the [timer](#) and put it in defrost. If you've got an [adaptive defrost control](#), it depends on the unit, there are steps that you have to take to manually put it into defrost cycle. Some of it will be flipping the [light switch](#) several times; other ones it's turning it on and off several times within five seconds but there might be a tech sheet on your unit, normally on the underside of it, and it will tell you what to do to initiate a defrost situation to check it. Otherwise, you could just replace the other two components. Then you've got a new defrost system and you should be all set.

LOU

You're kidding! Listen, now the timer circuit board, where did you say that was located?

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally it's on the underside of the unit. If you take off the front [kick plate](#) it could be under there, or in the back near the compressor area. That's where they hide the timer or the adaptive defrost control.

LOU

Beautiful! I appreciate your help and your knowledge is invaluable! Thank you very much.

1993 Maytag Heavy Duty Top Loading Washing Machine Vibrates and Walks

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a [Maytag washer](#), Lorna, in Farmington Hills, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Lorna, go ahead please.

LORNA

Good morning! I have a [Maytag heavy duty washer](#), approximately fifteen years old and the problem is it severely vibrates on, I'd say the medium to the heavier weight loads. Such as blue jeans, towels, a load of sheets, that sort of thing, and sometimes it will walk and you have to take it back and rebalance it. I'm noticing that even when it is balanced, it is still vibrating. What causes should I be looking at for that?

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a [top loading washer](#)?

LORNA

I'm sorry! Yes, this is a top loading washer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and you say you rebalance it. You're securing the [leveling legs](#) to the floor?

LORNA

Yes, that's correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you've got the legs up inside the machine as far as they will go and still allow you to balance it?

LORNA

That's it. Yes!

JOHN SOWDEN

A lot of times as people level the machine they keep lowering the [legs](#) and when they get done they've got the machine two or three inches up off the floor. You want to get as low as you can to keep the center of gravity as low as you can. If it keeps going out of balance, on the substructure of the machine there is the base of the unit, and then there is the part that the [transmission](#) and the tub mounts to, and in between those there is a set of felt pads.

LORNA
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are normally three [springs](#) that hold this tub assembly down to the frame of your machine. If those felt pads are worn out, the machine will go out of balance quite easily and start to walk. As far as replacing them, it's not as much difficult as it's a lot of wrestling with the machine. You have to take off the lower [pulley](#), so it's something that you might want to have somebody come out and do and they can also just look the machine over in general. But I wouldn't start adjusting the spring tension or anything of that nature. Most of those springs are very heavy and don't fail very often. It's usually what they call the [damper pad assembly](#) that causes that, by not allowing the unit to ride properly on the frame of the washing machine.

LORNA

Okay. So some place that's local? We have a place in our area called "Bill & Rod's Appliance". So we should have somebody like that come out, pull out the [front panel](#) and replace them if necessary?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. First thing that I'd want to do is just have them inspect the unit in general. They might open the front panel and find you've got a leak somewhere; the [transmission](#) is leaking, something that may be terminal and may not be worth putting the money into the machine, otherwise yeah, and anybody that you're familiar with. You might even want to get a hold of the manufacturer, since they can tell you who's authorized in your area. But word of mouth is always a good thing.

LORNA

Okay, well great. Thank you very much. I will take it from there then. I appreciate your help and you guys have a great day!

Sub Zero Side by Side Refrigerator Ice Maker Intermittently Making Ice

JOHN SOWDEN

Now we're going to talk to Mike, in Commerce Township.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Okay, Mike. Go ahead please, you're on the Appliance Repair Show.

MIKE

Yeah, hi guys. I'm calling about a [Sub Zero fridge](#), side by side. A lot of ice maker questions today that prompted me to call. Mine is making ice, but only intermittently. I've taken the [ice maker](#) out and put a piece of cardboard in to force the lever down to see if that would make ice; that would work, when I forced that lever down. I think that only when the lever is down is it making ice. So anyway, I'm getting it to make the ice intermittently, but this morning it wasn't making anything.

JOHN SOWDEN

So the ice maker does make cubes intermittently and when it does, is the mold full? Is it making the right amount, which is eight cubes, I think, on that unit?

MIKE

Yes, it seems to be making full loads.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Do you know what [model](#) you have?

MIKE

No, I don't.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if it's making cubes intermittently, it may be because your freezer temperature is not cold enough: it needs to be about fifteen degrees or less in the freezer to cycle the ice maker so start by checking that and make sure things are frozen solid in there. The other thing is that the [ice maker head assembly](#), the internal part of it where the arm rests and turns the unit on and off, could be worn or broken. They also have an [ice maker arm kit](#) for a lot of those that is an extension of the ice maker arm and it's got a heavier plastic piece on the end of it. Normally that's needed when the ice maker isn't shutting off, though. The other thing you want to check is, if your unit has an [ice bin](#) that you slide out —

MIKE

Yes, it does.

JOHN SOWDEN

There's a [switch](#) in the back of that that you have to have actuated when you slide that bin in place, so make sure the bin is going all the way back so you're making that switch.

MIKE

Okay. I think that might have been the issue once or twice, but when I manually forced that thing down, it did make ice.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. From what you're describing, I'd lean towards replacing the [ice maker head assembly](#), or just getting a new ice maker, but make sure that [switch](#) is made properly in the carriage of the [ice maker bin](#) first.