

Appliance Repair Show – March 8, 2009

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1997 Amana Gas Dryer with No Heat

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Lets start things out today with Tom, in Dearborn, with a dryer question on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi, Tom. Go ahead.

TOM

Hi, good morning, sir. Yes, I have an [Amana dryer](#) and it runs electrically and all that but there's [no heat](#). And, I'm not very handy at all I'm going to call appliance people. I just want to know what you think I should expect.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a gas or [electric dryer](#), Tom?

TOM

It's gas, sir.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it runs, but [it does not heat](#)?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how old is it roughly?

TOM

About twelve years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Twelve years old. The first problem that you've had it with it?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a good thing. I mean not that you have a problem but that you've gotten a dozen years out of it without any issues. Most often a [no heat condition](#) in a dryer, a gas dryer, is one of about three components possibly four components. Most commonly is the [igniter](#) and/or the gas valves on the... [gas coils](#) on the [gas valve assembly](#). They're electrical solenoids that open the gas valve and allow gas to flow through. Those are probably the two biggest things causing the issue. There's also a [light sensor](#) that's in that circuit as well as a [thermostat](#) for sensing the heat. And, on some of them they have a high limit thermostat that's a one time fuse basically where if your [dryer overheats](#) it will shut off either the whole dryer depending on how it's wired or the heating portion of it. So, first thing you can do is inspect your vent. Make sure that it is clean, not folded up behind the dryer and is as short as possible to get you to the outside. Overheat conditions are something that you can do; you can look at the [vent](#) and check that out. Otherwise, if you have a person come out, replace the igniter, you're more than likely looking at I'd say, again depending on who you call, anywhere between \$80 and \$140 depending on the cost of the part, service charges, things of that nature. And, its also, you can have someone come out normally for a fee they will, normally have a trip fee or a diagnostic fee. Normally, in the area of around \$50 or \$60 again depending on whom you call and that'll give you idea of how much you're going to spend, not only total, but they can also assess the dryer in general. And, if they look in there and say all right well this is worn and that is worn there might be some other parts are in the lurch of being of ready to break down or cause you more problems like a [belt](#), an [idler pulley](#), things of that nature - wearing parts. You might want to kind of have a tune up done if you are going to pay one service call.

TOM

Uh-huh.

JOHN SOWDEN

At that point, you're probably looking at a few hundred bucks, but you should be able to get several more years of, hopefully, maintenance free use out of the machine. So, you have to look at how much is a new one? Do I like this [dryer](#)? Does it match my washer? A lot of people want to have a set that looks the same. I am not one of those people. I have some mismatched stuff downstairs. As long as it works, I am happy. So, those are all the things to consider, but you can probably kiss a \$100 bill goodbye to have this repaired is my long winded point here.

TOM

Well, I thank you very much for the education there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling this morning.

TOM

All right. Bye, bye.

2007 Kitchen Aid Dishwasher, Model KUDK03ITBL1, Noisy During Cycle

JM

Let's go to Jim, in Brighton, with [Kitchen Aid dishwasher](#) question, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi, Jim. Go ahead.

JIM

Hey how ya doing? I got a Kitchen Aid [dishwasher](#) it's probably about two years old. When you start it up, it would make a very, very terrible noise and it seemed to happen right after we had a brown, a brownout here.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, you had a power surge or a brownout and then ever since then [it's been making noise](#).

JIM

Someone said to go clean out the trap which I did. I found everything from the ends of bread wrappers in there...

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, yeah.

JIM

Okay, so I cleaned it out and I said okay good and went through that and now its even louder.

JOHN SOWDEN

Have you broken any glasses in there, any wine glasses that came out with some chips in it or anything of that nature?

JIM

I'm going to say yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, yeah. That's normally if you don't get right after that that can be kind of terminal for the [motor pump assembly](#) and what happens is those small pieces get down in there and, what happens is when you select the wash cycle the motor starts up and it turns a

series, I guess for lack of better words, little fan blades but they move water or their called impellers. That is what pushes the water through the different [wash arms](#) and when you break a part of that off it does spin true and it can cause a lot of vibration and clanging eventually those glass particles and things of that nature will damage and break the water seal and then you start running water into the motor which is never a good thing. So, I don't really think that the condition of a brownout now is making noise; it doesn't sound like that's what occurred as far as what caused this. More than likely it was a timing issue and you just have stuff or debris caught in the [motor pump assembly](#). Now, this is one of the newer style dishwashers. You may have to pull the [dishwasher](#) in order to get at the motor pump assembly. On some of them, if you look underneath it, it's hard to get underneath them, it's probably easier to pull it, but a lot of them, if you can reach under there you can normally pop that motor and pump assembly out from the inside. There's a few locking tabs that lock it into the tank and then get it out and work at it that way. And then, the motor pump assembly kind of snaps into place; it turns and locks into place assembly where the plastic housing you know will remain and then you just take the motor pump assembly out and you can get in there and look around. If you are going to replace the motor pump assembly, you might want to do it as a complete assembly with the new housing and everything else rather than just get the motor but that's up to you. Normally, it's a few bucks more to get the whole assembly but it's a lot less messing around in the long term.

JIM

Okay, so really what you're saying is pull it out?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, what I'm saying is you can if you can get the [motor pump assembly](#) out. Like I said, it is kind of a twist and lock assembly in there. You might see straight away the evidence of what's in there beating around and remove it. You may be able to put it back together and it might be all right. I would still kind of keep an eye on it for a while, again once the motor seals go you have a situation where: A. you're ruining the motor, and B. If you have a wood floor or something like that, you're [dripping water](#) that you're not seeing onto the floor underneath the dishwasher and most times people don't realize they have a problem with the unit until there wood floor buckles in front of it and then by then its a much bigger expense than just repairing the [dishwasher](#).

JIM

Okay?

JOHN SOWDEN

All right?

JIM

All right, well thank you very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling this morning.

1999 Whirlpool Gas Dryer Taking Too Long to Dry

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Mike, in Clarkston, with a [dryer](#) question, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Mike.

MIKE

Hi, I have a dryer. It's about 10 years old. It's a [Whirlpool](#). I actually picked it up on the side of the road and brought it home to use it and the igniter is good. It heats up, but [it doesn't dry the clothes](#) all the way. I have to reset it depending on if its towels. I have to reset it a couple times to get the towels dry.

JOHN SOWDEN

And this is a gas dryer?

MIKE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you say you are getting heat? The [burner assembly](#) does fire?

MIKE

It fires, you know it burns for a little while and it just doesn't dry the whole load.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Does it re-ignite after the first cycle? See what happens in a gas dryer, any dryers they pulse the heat in the drum meaning that you start it up. It will light the main burner assembly or, for electric it'll send current to the [heating element](#), and then once a dryer reaches about 160 degrees on normal or 135 or so on permanent press, it will then cycle off the heat and it will tumble until the temperature comes down 10 or 20 degrees lower than that and then it will turn the heat back on. And that will happen, cycle on and off, the duration of the cycle, so it's possible that it's lighting the first time and then it's not lighting the second time.

MIKE

Ah, certainly.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's normally caused from the [gas valve solenoid coils](#) are weak and what happens is the first time with the dryer being cold, they will open up and allow gas through and then as it runs they'll heat up a little bit and all these solenoids are a long length of very small copper wire that are wrapped around a post, basically, or create a solenoid and that little wire will actually break from the heat and then when it cools down it will make the connection again.

MIKE
I got it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally what happens is it'll look like everything's fine when you push the button and walk away. It's heating. You hear the [gas valve](#) fire up and then you come back downstairs and it's not working. The other thing you need to always inspect is the [vent](#). Make sure that it's clean not crunched and you know all the way outside. Cleaning it all out and just because you go outside and you see some steam coming out doesn't necessarily mean that it's allowing letting enough CFM's out to work properly. And what happens then is if you have an airflow backup there's a [thermostat](#) mounted on the force cone or that [burner assembly](#) that will shut the unit off because it's sensing an overheat. So, you need a good airflow to pull that flame down that cone shaped metal ductwork inside there otherwise the flame rises up and actuates this thermostat. So, I would start with the vent...

MIKE

Once I make sure it has good flow, good airflow, I could probably narrow it down to this solenoid coil then.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. The quick and easy way to do that, to see if it's a vent, is to simply just disconnect the [vent](#) and run it through a load.

MIKE

Sure.

JOHN SOWDEN

I do not recommend running a [gas dryer](#) in your home for any longer than one test load. Or, just to see if it's working fine, but that's the easy way out. That way you know it's in your vent assembly. Afterwards, you have to kind of sit there and watch it cycle. If you have a thermometer, you can put that in the vent and watch and see. Does it cycle up to 150 160, turn off. Once it gets back down to around 130 or so you should hear the ignition sequence start again. The igniter comes on, the [light sensor](#) cycles off the [igniter](#) and then allows current to go to the gas valve coils. From what you're telling me, if the vent's all right, my money is on the [gas valve coils](#) being weak.

MIKE

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right.

MIKE

Thank you.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling.

1979 Tappan Range Not Heating During Bake

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Your calls on major appliances, major or minor problems with major appliances and Bob, in Warren, has a [Tappan oven](#) that won't light, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, please Bob.

BOB

Yeah, good morning guys. Good show.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you.

BOB

I've got a [Tappan free standing stove](#). Its 30 years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

BOB

I'd put a couple of [igniters](#) in it and it always fixed the problem. The oven [it wouldn't light](#). The top burners do light. It's an electric ignition. The top [burners](#) work. I put a new igniter in it, but it didn't light. After the fact, I figured, you know I always thought that was the problem but now I figured I'd go a little bit further. I did meter the wires at the igniter and I got zero volts across the circuit.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

BOB

And, then I metered there's another electronic thing inside the oven itself, the gas line goes to it and then it leads into the burner itself.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. That's the [oven gas valve](#).

BOB

That is the gas valve. Okay. I metered it and I got 120 on one side but I have 0 volts across the circuit.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

BOB

So, I stopped right there. I thought I'd get in touch with the experts.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well the easiest way to diagnose this is to use your [ohms scale](#) instead of the voltage scale. What happens is they feed the current through the igniter and that [igniter](#) is in series with the small heater inside the [gas valve](#). Once the igniter gets hot enough and/or, basically, you have a resistance drop on that when it heats up and once resistance drops through the igniter it then allows more current to act on the small heater inside the gas valve which then opens the gas valve. So, just because the oven igniter is glowing bright orange does not necessarily mean it hasn't failed electrically or it's getting weak. Now you say you bought a new igniter for this?

BOB

Yes, I did.

JOHN SOWDEN

Did you get the one specific for your [model](#)?

BOB

I just went into the appliance store and I showed them what I had in my hand and he gave me that. As far as, you know, being compatible, I do not know.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. The first thing I would do is make sure you get the right igniter because the vintage of the stove you're describing; on the older units they had an igniter that had to draw a certain amount of current. Normally, it's like 2.5 to 3.0 amps in order to work properly. And, then a lot of the newer one's are actually over the three amps. They're like 3.1, .3.2. So, if you've got the wrong [igniter](#) and you have it in the wrong system that could be causing your problem. So, I would start by [model, serial number](#). Make sure that you have the correct igniter. That's the only thing that has really changed. You know before it was working and now it's not working. Was the igniter glowing when you noticed it had quit igniting?

BOB

No, no, it does not glow at all.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, it has quit. I would start: A. Make sure you have the right igniter. The other one is remove the wiring and, obviously, after you unplug the unit, check across that [gas valve](#). Those two terminals with wires removed you should read about one ohm.

BOB

One ohm, it should read?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yep, in that neighborhood. That's pretty low. You need to set it to the lowest scale there. And if that's open, that's your problem. There's a small heater in there actually that kind of acts on a bi-metal and warps away the seal for the gas and allows the gas to flow through to your [igniter](#). The other thing is on some of the older Tappan's, they had a fuse. That was an in-line [fuse](#) for that circuit and you can check your wiring diagram.

BOB

I don't have that.

JOHN SOWDEN

It is normally in the back panel of the unit.

BOB

It's burned off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

BOB

That was the first place I went.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. That will tell you, if you had one; if not then you can trace the wiring. And, they hide these in the worst places. A lot of times, it'll be underneath the [main top](#). There'll be a little black button that's a push and turn fuse like a car would use and there might be a five amp fuse in that circuit, but you're telling me you have current to the [gas valve](#) itself probably tells me that's all right.

BOB

But it's an open circuit. Like I said to ground, I get the 120.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, right, so if there breaking the common through that [fuse](#) you can still end up with the same reading. But, I would start with and make sure you have the right [igniter](#), then check across the [gas valve](#) coils because from what you are describing that may be the problem. If that is burnt, you know, open then you're not going to get anything to glow.

BOB

So, that gas valve actually sends a signal to the [igniter](#). Is that what it is?

JOHN SOWDEN

The current goes through the gas valve through the igniter back to the gas valve.

BOB

Oh, I see.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, if anything broke, an open circuit, an open heater inside will also cause that.

BOB

Question on this now, I looked every where on this. Where would I find a [model number](#) on it? I tore everything apart except for, you know, disassembling it and I find nothing on it.

JOHN SOWDEN

On the Tappan's, you lift up the [main top](#) and its going to be on a sticker, normally, on the side or sometimes even under where the main crossbar goes for the [burners](#).

BOB

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

And if not, then look around the oven door frame or broiler drawer frame.

BOB

Yeah, I looked everywhere there, its not there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. If you to lift up the maintop on that. It might be in the far back corner.

BOB

Okay, so I guess to summarize, I'm going to start with the [ohmmeter](#), I'm going to go right into that [igniter](#), I mean not the igniter but the, what was that valve?

JOHN SOWDEN

The [safety valve](#).

BOB

The gas valve. Go right over there. If I don't get one ohm I know it's the gas valve and just go get that, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, but you are still going to need [model and serial number](#) to get the right one.

BOB

Okay. Sounds good. I'm going to look for that.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right.

BOB

Great! Fantastic! Could I have your number, you know to your parts place, please?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure, its 1-800-269-2609.

BOB

And, you are open today?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, we are until 6 o'clock on our parts counter, midnight in the call center, and our website is open 24/7.

BOB

You are the folks. Thank you.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thanks for the call, Bob. This is the Appliance Repair Show answering your questions about major appliances in your home, on News Talk 760 WJR.

2000 Frigidaire Gallery Front Load Washing Machine, Model FWT449GFS2, Not Spinning

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll start out this segment with Guy, in Leslie, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Guy, Go ahead, please.

JOHN SOWDEN

Good morning.

GUY

Good morning. I have about a nine year old, [Frigidaire Gallery front loading washer](#) and [it will not spin](#) in any cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN

It will not spin but does it wash?

GUY

It does everything but spin.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

GUY

So, the [timer](#) or speed board?

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often it's a [speed board](#).

GUY

That's what I thought. I tested the speed board and everything worked on it except step six and it didn't show any resistance.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. The timer on those, a lot of those machines they have a timer and they do serve an electrical purpose, at times, as far as switching back and forth current to the appropriate pieces in the machine. A lot of the timers and things of that nature, on a lot of the newer machines are just there more or less for cosmetics meaning that a lot of people are kind of afraid of all one touch control panels, things of that nature, so you literally put in a [timer](#). It does serve some electrical functions but, obviously, with all the technology they could put the machine with just circuitry boards and have it do the same thing, but yeah, most often, it's the [motor spin control board](#). There are tests you can do on the timer that will, as it advances, will show you that it will pulse back and forth for sending the signal to the board, five seconds on, five seconds off which, basically, is pulsating the agitation and reversing the [motor](#). And, there is a [service manual](#) available for that which might not be a bad idea which gets more into the step by step. It sounds like you are almost there. And yet, if you've got a failed test on that, again, most often the problem on that is the spin control board.

GUY

Okay and there's really no way to repair that board other than replace it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it really depends how good you are at that. The problem lies in, a lot of times, the manufacturer does not provide a print for those [boards](#), so even if you wanted to repair it, its really hard to get started without knowing what you're looking at. If you have somebody who's kind of an electronic genius they might be able to get at that but most often, yes, its time for a new board.

GUY

Or, a new [washing machine](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, I think the board is a \$250 bill, so you're looking at... I'd inspect other things. Make sure the [boot](#) looks okay. Look at the back of the unit and see if there are any signs of any leakage through the main shaft going through the tub so if you have a shaft seal leak that's normally a sign you're going to have a bearing problem in the future. I'd just take a general inspection and go from there.

GUY

Okay, very good.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling.

Kenmore Washing Machine: Hot Water is Slow to Fill

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go to Rich now, in Portage, Michigan, with a [washer](#) question here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Rich. Go ahead.

RICH

Yes, I have an older [Kenmore washing machine](#) and the hot [water comes out extremely slow](#) and we're on well water and we have some rust and the back where the hoses go on, there are some screens there and I'm wondering if you can take those screens out to try and clean it.

JOHN SOWDEN

The screens are on the [water inlet valve](#). You're removing the [hoses](#) at the washer?

RICH

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, you can gently pop those out and you can soak them in vinegar overnight, take an old toothbrush and clean those out. The best thing to do is to then get some [hose washers](#) with screens and put that up at the shut off, you know, where you have it hooked up to your plumbing and that way you can clean them out in the future without having to pull the [washer](#) out.

RICH

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

It also adds another layer of protection. I normally recommend replacing the [water inlet valve](#) and then putting the hose washers with screens beforehand because what can happen as you are wrestling those screens out, normally a pair of tweezers to pull them out, you can get other debris that gets beyond them and then it gets inside the valve.

RICH

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, if you don't get the screens for the [washing machine](#) in their original condition so when you push them back in they seal up around the outside edge of the valve then you can get other particles leaching by the screen and then what happens is the water inlet valve does not shut off.

RICH

Can you get a wire or anything back in after you take the screen out to try and clean out back inside?

JOHN SOWDEN

You can try that. I mean a lot of times people clean the screens out and it works fine, but I've also seen it where you've cleaned it out and it looks like its working fine and you come down two weeks later and the [water is overflowing](#) the washer and your basement's wet or wherever you have it and its because you have a particle of something that's stuck between the seat and the valve body now and when it goes time to shut off it doesn't shut off. So, [water inlet valves](#) are fairly inexpensive. Normally, they're around \$20 – \$30. You'll find that if you change that and put the screen washers in you'll have much shorter wash times and it will take a lot less time to fill up and then you won't have to worry about it when you start the [washer](#) and leave the house.

RICH

The other thing is I'm a little afraid if I try to take those old screens out they'll break anyway.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, actually if it's a [Whirlpool](#) they have a screen set that you can actually buy and I think there like ten bucks. That comes with the washers and screens and again for a little over double that you can just replace that whole component and you're alleviating a lot of possible future grief.

RICH

Thank you.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling this morning.

1994 Insinkerator Garbage Disposal Making a Lot of Noise

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's a [disposer](#) question from Mary, in Waterville, Ohio, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi, Mary. Go ahead.

MARY

Hi. I have an [Insinkerator disposal](#). It works fine, but it sounds like a truck.

JOHN SOWDEN

It sounds like a truck. How old is this disposal?

MARY

It's 15 yrs old.

JOHN SOWDEN

From what you're describing, what normally happens is there's a [turntable](#) or a plate that spins around and grinds up the food and then each side of that plate is another smaller kind of a foot that has a rivet through it and as its turning around, those feet are allowed to free float and beat against the side of the [disposal](#) and what normally happens those rivets become loose or one of those feet will break loose and, of course, the turntable is turning not balanced and causes an awful lot of racket. If it's a 15 year old machine, you can replace the turntables on those and the seal kits, but by the time you disassemble the machine, buy the parts, tear it apart, all that good stuff, you're better off to just put in a [new disposal](#).

MARY

Get a new disposal? Okay, you answered my question. Thank you very much.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

The good news, Mary, is they're not that expensive.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, you can get a decent one for under \$100.

2004 Whirlpool Calypso Washing Machine, Model 110.22062100, Not Spinning All the Water Out

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, that's the truth too. Keith, in Ypsilanti, has a question on a washer here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Keith.

KEITH

I got a [Calypso washer](#). It's about five years old. And, it keeps not spinning out the water in the spin cycle. The [clothes are sopping wet](#) so I have to hit extended spin and yesterday I had to even hit extended spin twice to get it to get the water out.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, so [it's not pumping the water out](#)?

KEITH

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Does it pump it out at all or does it come out really slow?

KEITH

When I hit the extended spin it usually does but I had to hit it twice yesterday to pump the water out. I've had Sears out and they've replaced the [water pump](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, they've already replaced the water pump?

KEITH

Yes, they replaced the water pump, but I don't think that was the problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that is the most common failure from you're complaint of what its doing. And how long ago did they replace this?

KEITH

A month.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And has it never worked proper after that?

KEITH

No, almost from the first load I did, it came up long drain. I had to hit extended spin again and I had them come back out and they checked the [electronics](#) out and said they checked out fine, but I still have the problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, first of all, you should still have a warranty if it's only been a month. I'd look at the service ticket and see what they extend, but I wouldn't do anything beyond getting a hold of who you already paid to repair this and see if they can come back out and take another shot at it. I can tell you that the [pump](#) would be the most common failing thing from the [no drain](#) situation. Now, there are underneath that tank, there's a series of check balls that kind of go back and forth with the water flow that allow it to seal off the different ports to allow it to drain and its possible that you've got, basically lint, things of that nature, in amongst those ports which is causing these balls to not seal against the seat and these check valves, basically, is what they act as and it might be causing that problem. There is also a diverter valve in there that switches it from circulating the water through the top because when you're running it, it's kind of got that, I think they call it the power tower or power shower or something but anyways it squirts water on the top of your clothes. And there's a valve down there that [switches](#) the diversion of the water from that to the drain and it's possible that you've got something caught in there that's causing it. It sounds like, especially since you replaced the [pump](#) and the electronics checked out, that the [board](#) is telling the components to do what it is and that you probably have a restriction somewhere and I would lean more towards either the diverter valve or something just caught in the lower [tank assembly](#).

KEITH

Right, he tried to blame it, the service man tried to blame it on the new double X soap. Now is that possible for the soap to foam up so much it would cause the pump not to work?

JOHN SOWDEN

I mean you could get an air lock in there, I guess, and they don't use a lot of water on those machines, but...

KEITH

But, I've reduced my soap way down. I'm not only using not even a ¼ cup of soap.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, if you are using the type of soap that the manufacturer recommends which is the He or high efficiency soap which is much greater concentrated and you're using it in the proper measures for your loads then I would say that unless you got a bad batch of soap that that's probably not the issue.

KEITH

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

I mean that's something if you do get too much soap, it will foam and you'll get a lock out code of long drain because the [pump](#) is just trying to pump foam. So, you can try adding three or four pitchers of just water in there and see if it will pump that out.

KEITH

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Increase the water level and that will help dilute the soap if it is the soap that is the issue. If you have been using too much soap, in the past, it's possible that you have a lot of soap residue inside the [outer tank](#) where you can't necessarily see it. And, then every time you use it you're reactivating that and you're getting a lot of the soap. It could be you used a lot of soap for a long period of time, but again I'd say with everything else you're talking about it's probably the diverter [valve](#) or those check valves underneath the tank.

KEITH

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right?

KEITH

All right. Thanks a lot.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thank you for calling this morning

Frigidaire Refrigerator, Model FRT21IL5DB0, Noisy During the Defrost Cycle

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thank you very much. And, we'll go now to Len, in Livonia, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi, Len. Go ahead, please.

LEN

Yes, I have a [Frigidaire refrigerator](#) and in the defrost cycle [it makes a lot of noise](#); snap, crackle, pop like ping pong balls.

JOHN SOWDEN

Does it also sound like you're throwing water on a hot grill?

LEN

Yes, and you know I've had the repairman out and they say that's normal although they never heard this sound because it never happens when anybody's there. I am at the point of I'm going to start ripping it apart and see what I can do with it because it's that loud.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, Len, hopefully you observed since my last question that I have, in fact, heard that noise before. And that is, as long the machine is working properly, that is normal operation. And, what happens is when the unit goes into defrost, it turns off the compressor, turns on a set of [heaters](#) behind the back wall in your freezer and melts all the frost and ice off the cooling coil and then it drips through a little trough to the underside of your [refrigerator](#) where that water evaporates into the room air. And that defrost cycle, when that frost turns to water, you get a lot of cracking and stuff similar to throwing ice cubes in a glass of water where you get that kind of a crack. That's normal. And the hissing sound I described, that's also normal because you've got [water dripping](#) on a hot [heating element](#). They use an element on a lot of them. It's somewhat similar to what you would have in a [bake element](#) on your [electric stove](#) only in a much lower wattage, of course. So, it is annoying.

LEN

Is there anything I can do to reduce the sound of it? You know, it's at the point now that I'm ready to get rid of the machine. You know, it's really at my cottage so I'm not there that much, but when I'm there, it can wake me up. It's that loud.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that is something that, again, mine at home makes the same noises. It's pretty common. Some machines by installation, you know how old the machine is the installation properties of the cabinet. You might get more or less noise, but overall there's nothing that you can do about it. Now one thing that you might be able to do is, you're unit has a [defrost timer](#). And, so every roughly six or eight hours, depending on the timer, it will go into defrost and what you can do is, you can manually advance that timer to go into when you want it to and then it will defrost after that point. So my point is, you could set it, so before you go to bed put it in defrost. That way it will not defrost for another six or eight hours or while you're sleeping. It won't defrost. You won't hear those noises. You can kind of cheat the timing of the noise if it's bothering you that much.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

That's good advice, actually. Set the machine so it doesn't disturb you.

