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NF97-348 Making Decisions: Buying a Clothes Dryer

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Making Decisions: Buying a Clothes Dryer

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What should you look for when shopping for a clothes dryer? It is wise to purchase a washer and dryer as a pair so they will accommodate the same size loads. All clothes dryers are front loading, but some are designed to be placed above a front loading washer to save room. Check the space you have available. Do you have an opening for attaching duct pipes to vent moist exhaust air outside?

Here are some features to look for:

What cycles are best for you? A normal cycle dries clothes and cools them enough for you to handle. A permanent press cycle cools clothes longer and signals for you to remove them. The dryer may continue tumbling to prevent wrinkles until you remove the clothes.

- Do you want a damp dry cycle to get clothes ready for ironing?
- Would an air-fluff cycle be useful for fluffing pillows?
- Would a no-tumble drying shelf or cycle help when drying sneakers and sweaters?

Would a moisture sensor provide more even drying? Most electric and gas clothes dryers provide moisture sensors, located at key contact points in the drum, to stop drying as soon as the moisture left in the clothes is low enough. The 1994 Federal Energy Standards resulted in dryers having at least one automatic-drying cycle. Sensors may also be thermostats that monitor drying indirectly by measuring the temperature of the air leaving the drum.

Is the lint filter located in a convenient place to clean it between loads? Lint buildup slows drying, and lint that gets past the filter can be a fire hazard. Is it easy for you to clean and replace the filter?

Will special controls be useful? Some dryers have sensors to stop drying when clothes are damp dry for ironing. An extra dry control allows extra drying time. Is the stop signal, if present, loud enough for

you to hear that the load is done, or are there optional light signals? Do you want knobs, push buttons or an electronic panel? How much do repairs cost on each type? Which are easier for you to use and to see?

Do you need special features?

- A reversible door can make a dryer easier to use in some tight locations, especially if you may be moving.
- A light in the dryer is good if the dryer is to be used in a dark area.
- A program screen lets you see how far along the cycle has come.

Differences between clothes dryers are largely capacity, price and dryer size. What drum capacity is needed? Full-sized models are usually 27 to 29 inches wide with a drum capacity of 5 to 7 cubic feet. Larger drums are useful if bulky items like comforters are dried in the dryer. Larger drums usually result in fewer wrinkles in clothes dried in large loads. Dryers are also available in compact models with about 3 cubic feet or more of drum capacity. If electric, these can often be plugged into a regular outlet. People who want to move their washer and dryer to one level for convenience, or to avoid steps, may find compact units, all-in-one washer/dryer combinations, or stacked washer and dryer models easier to place.

Refer to a consumers' magazine or book for comparison studies about clothes dryers. Check with your library or local Cooperative Extension office.

Clothes Dryer Information			
Open to right _____ Open to left _____ Open down _____ Stackable _____			
Space for clothes dryer: Height _____ in. Width _____ in. Depth _____ in.			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Clothes dryer make and model			
Retailer			
Drum capacity (cubic feet)			
Clothes dryer size (height, width, depth; w/ door opened/closed)			
Other features I want (list)			
Other features in each model			
Controls easy to see and use			
Control features — knobs, push buttons or electronic			

panel			
Take old dryer free or for a fee? Delivery cost or free?			
Cost			
Direction of door opening			
Energy efficiency			

Other NebFacts in this series include:

- *Making Decisions: Buying a Dishwasher*, NF97-333
- *Making Decisions: Buying a Microwave Oven*, NF97-334
- *Making Decisions: Buying Home Appliances*, NF97-335
- *Making Decisions: Buying a Refrigerator*, NF97-336
- *Making Decisions: Buying a Range*, NF97-337
- *Making Decisions: Household Water Saving Equipment*, NF97-338
- *Making Decisions: EnergyGuides and Major Home Appliances*, NF97-345
- *Making Decisions: Buying a Washing Machine*, NF97-346
- *Making Decisions about Service Contracts and Appliances*, NF97-347
- *Handling Wastes: Household Appliances (White Goods)*, NF94-189

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