



Maintaining the Home

Dishwasher Care and Cleaning

Maintaining the Home: Dishwasher Care and Cleaning

Load the dishwasher properly following suggestions in the appliance manual. Use only dishwasher detergent in the recommended amounts. Do not put any other cleaning compound inside the dishwasher, as it may suds and interfere with the dishwashing action. Store detergent in a dry, cool place and do not keep extra packages on hand for a long time as it absorbs moisture from the air and then loses cleaning ability.

A dishwasher should always be plugged into a grounded outlet; do not use an extension cord.

If hot water has not been used in the house for two weeks or longer, open all hot water faucets and let them run several minutes before using the dishwasher or any other electrical appliance connected to hot water. Do not smoke or light any flame while the faucets are running; hydrogen gas which is flammable and explosive may build up in the water heater and hot water pipes if hot water is not used for a long time.

Dishwasher Cleaning

The interior is self-cleaning. If a stain does occur, clean with dishwasher detergent and water, wearing rubber gloves to protect hands from a very alkaline detergent. A heavy film buildup from hard water minerals may be removed by adding vinegar or citric acid crystals (you can buy at drugstore) to an empty dishwasher, after it fills with water at the start of the first cycle. Do this

only if the appliance manual suggests this is OK, and if the buildup bothers the owner (as it does no harm). However, very hard water can deposit mineral film on dishes, glasses and flatware, the dishwasher pump and moving parts. If water is very hard, it is wise to install a water softener before installing a dishwasher.

If iron in the water causes rust stains inside the dishwasher, buy a commercial soluble rust remover (at grocery or hardware stores). Check the label to be sure it can be used in a dishwasher. Start the empty dishwasher on the rinse cycle. As it fills, open the dishwasher and add 1/2 cup rust remover. Let the dishwasher complete the cycle. If the iron problem continues so that another treatment is required, it may be better to install an iron filter in your water system to remove iron as this will affect dishes, laundry and all fixtures.

This material was adapted from publications produced by Michigan State University. Michigan State publications can be found on the Web at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/mod02/master02.html>.

*This resource is one in a series on **Maintaining the Home** which include:*

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