



# ***Maintaining the Home***

## ***Washer Care and Cleaning***

# ***Maintaining the Home: Washer Care and Cleaning***

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Be careful when using laundry products not to spill them on the exterior of the washer. Wipe up any spills promptly with a damp soft cloth or paper towel. Most washer tops are porcelain enamel, which is quite resistant, but will be damaged by acids in rust removers or by long exposure to other chemicals. Sides and front of washer cabinets and some tops are synthetic enamel, which will be damaged quickly by ammonia, chlorine bleach, abrasives and solvents.

Do not spray pre-wash soil and stain removers onto garments on top of the washer. They can corrode painted and plastic parts such as the control panel. Do not treat garments with rust removers on top of the washer. Instead, use a sink and follow the label instructions.

Turn off hot and cold water faucets going to the tub between washdays to prevent water pressure strain on hoses. Check that hoses are not kinked or bent.

If you are away and no hot water has been used in the house for two weeks or longer, open all hot water faucets and let them run several minutes before using the washer or any other electrical appliance connected to hot water. Do not smoke or light any flame while 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.

## **Washer Cleaning**

If a very dirty or linty wash leaves soil residue behind, wipe out the inner tub. Leave the lid open so the tub will dry. Clean lint filters, and dispensers as directed in the manual. NEVER use detergent to clean fabric softener dispensers as residue left behind can combine with fabric softener to stain clothes.

Wash outside of the washer with mild suds, rinse and wipe dry. Creamy appliance wax can be used occasionally, especially on painted surfaces, for extra surface protection.

If hard water minerals build up a deposit inside the washer, do not use a vinegar rinse unless you contact the washer manufacturer or dealer and get their OK. Porcelain enamel washer inner tubs are made to resist alkalis (in detergent and laundry additives) not acids. Long exposure to acids can etch and roughen porcelain enamel tubs so they damage fabrics and may also rust metal parts of the washer.

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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