

# NOBLESVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



## CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

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## Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ducts

Clothes dryers and exhaust duct systems are a significant fire hazard. In 2006, over 16,000 fires were caused by clothes dryers\*. In addition, the moisture and potential products of combustion (carbon monoxide for gas dryers) must be properly exhausted outside the building. Failure to do this can cause water damage, mold and mildew, and potential sickness or death due to carbon monoxide poisoning (with gas dryers).

Domestic clothes dryer exhaust systems in commercial occupancies are regulated by Section 504 of the 2008 Indiana Mechanical Code. The *exhaust duct* is the portion of the exhaust system that is permanently installed, or concealed within any construction. The *transition duct* is the short, flexible section that connects the dryer to the exhaust duct. The following points are a summarization of the relevant code sections – please contact us if you have specific questions.

### General Guidelines:

- Clothes dryers must be installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Clothes dryer exhausts may not be combined with any other exhaust system.
- Clothes dryer exhaust must convey the moisture and byproducts of combustion (carbon monoxide) to the outside of the building.
- A backdraft damper must be installed. Screens are not permitted.

### Exhaust Ducts:

- Must be constructed of metal, and have a smooth interior finish.
- Be at least 4" in diameter.
- Supported and secured in place.
- Male joints must extend in the direction of airflow.
- Must not be constructed with sheet metal screws or other fasteners that will obstruct the airflow. Metal foil tape may be used to secure the joints – duct or other cloth-based tape is not permitted.
- Maximum length of 25 feet, with 2 ½ feet deducted for every 45 degree bend and 5 feet for every 90 degree bend.
- Where part or all of the exhaust duct is concealed, a label must be applied in an observable location that specifies the length of the installed duct.

### Transition Ducts:

- Maximum of 8 feet (in addition to the 25' limit on the exhaust duct listed above).
- Listed and labeled in accordance with UL 2158A. In particular, this duct must be metal (not plastic). Although some products may list UL 181 flexible duct for dryer use, they are **no longer acceptable** as of December 2006 for use as a clothes dryer duct.
- Transition ducts may not be concealed within construction.

Disclaimer: This may not be a complete list of all code sections involving this subject, and is not the actual code that regulates this subject. Please reference the adopted codes in the state of Indiana (<http://www.in.gov/dhs/2490.htm>) for complete information.

\*March 2009 NFPA report "Home Fires Involving Clothes Dryers and Washing Machines"