



So who sets safety standards for dryers anyway? Well, two voluntary standards exist. For electric dryers it is Underwriters Laboratories UL 2158. For gas dryers the voluntary standard is ANSI Z21.5.1 (CGA 7.1). With these standards, rigid and semi-rigid metal vent pipes were the way to vent the dryer.

Although we were supposed to use metal pipe, almost all of us remember the flexible white plastic dryer vent hose kit sold in hardware stores. As it turns out, these combustible **white plastic hose kits are deadly** when improperly used as dryer venting

they are the reason for many dryer vent fires. However, until recently they were still commonly sold as dryer venting. It was not until December 2006 that Underwriters Laboratories established UL 2158A "Clothes Dryer Transition Duct" (flexible metal) which is an approved standard for flexible high temperature exhaust duct rated to 430 degrees Fahrenheit, that can also be used on both electric and gas dryers.

One of the ways that dryers can start household fires is by igniting the excess lint that accumulates around the motor, burner shroud (for gas dryers) and cabinet interior. You see, lint is composed of very small, dry clothing particles which includes cotton and polyesters--both very good fire starters. Polyesters are particularly pernicious fire starters and are very difficult to extinguish once they ignite. Polyesters, vinyl in particular, pose another fire hazard when used as vent hoses. One of the biggest causes of vent hose fires is when this accumulated lint inside the vent hose ignites. Lint gets caught in the folds and creases and sticks there because of the humidity. Over time, the lint builds up to such a degree that the dryer cannot exhaust properly. This results in increased drying times initially and, ultimately, in a fire.

[http://www.dryerbox.com/dryer\\_fire\\_articles.htm](http://www.dryerbox.com/dryer_fire_articles.htm)

#### **Clothes Dryer Building Code:**

- Dryer vent systems shall be independent of all other systems and shall convey the moisture to the outdoors. Terminations shall be a minimum of three feet from property line and 12" above the ground and not exhibit any type of screen.
- Vents and duct connections shall not be connected with sheet-metal screws or fastening means which extend into the vent.
- Exhaust vents shall be equipped with a back draft damper and no screen.
- Vents shall be constructed of minimum 0.016-inch-thick (0.406 mm) rigid metal ducts, having smooth interior surfaces with joints running in the direction of air flow and having a minimum interior diameter of 4".
- Flexible duct and the respective connectors shall not be concealed within the construction.
- The maximum length of a 4-inch (102 mm) diameter exhaust vent shall not exceed 25 feet (7620 mm) from the dryer location to wall or roof termination, and shall terminate with a full opening exhaust hood. Installations where this length is exceeded shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.

[International Mechanical Code](#) (section 504) and [International Residential Code](#) (section 1501). Summary: The International Mechanical Code article 504.6 stipulates the requirements for Domestic clothes dryer ducts. In brief, the maximum length of duct permitted is 25 ft. This maximum length should be reduced by 2.5 ft for each 45-degree bend and 5 ft. for each 90-degree bend. The duct should be a minimum nominal size of 4 inches in diameter and shall have a smooth interior finish.

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