

Dryer Vent Safety

CHICAGO, Ill. — Your shiny new dryer probably offers a wider selection of special fabric cycles, a larger door opening for fast loading and unloading and an easy-to-reach lint screen—all conveniences missing on that 20-year-old model that just died. Best of all, this larger capacity model fits right into the space vacated by the old dryer.

But before connecting your new dryer to the old exhaust vent, home economists from Whirlpool Corporation urge you to make a

safety check of its existing ductwork. "That exhaust vent system is probably as ancient as the original dryer and may be clogged with lint or made of a material that's combustible," they explain.

Whirlpool home economists note that many older dryers were vented with flexible vinyl ducting, a type of ducting no longer recommended by testing organizations such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or by dryer manufacturers.

Tests indicate that flexible vinyl ducting tends to collect and

hold lint in its creases, creating a potential fire hazard. Vinyl also melts at high temperatures, preventing it from containing a fire as well as metal ductwork can.

So, when installing a new dryer, Whirlpool home economists encourage homeowners to make the following safety checks to ensure that the dryer is connected to proper metal ductwork that has unblocked air flow:

- If ductwork is made of vinyl or other combustible material, replace it with 4-inch diameter rigid or flexible metal ducting.
- For a vent system with metal

ductwork, check to make sure it meets the manufacturer's recommendations for correct installation. Is it the correct length and generally straight with as few elbows as possible?

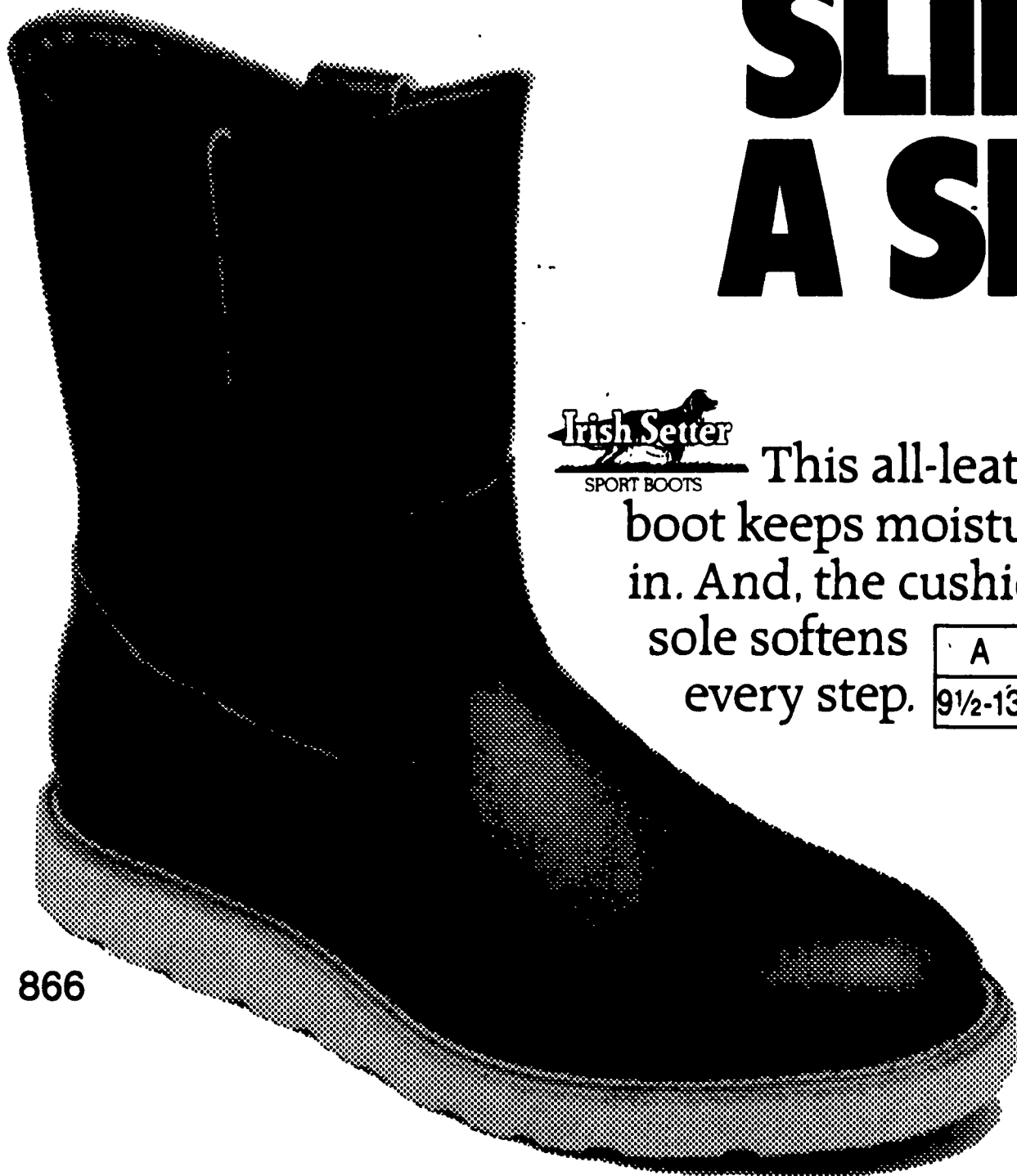
• Vacuum ductwork sections to make sure they're clean and free of lint.

Check the outside end of the ducting to see that it's uncovered. A covering (such as a grill screen, bag, stocking, etc.), can trap lint inside the ductwork, blocking dryer air flow. This can result in longer drying times, higher ener-

gy use and conditions that can cause a fire.

• Check the outside vent outlet to be sure it exhausts into an open area. Is it visible, easy to reach for cleaning and at least one foot above the ground to allow good air circulation? Never end dryer venting under a house or porch or in an air shaft, crawl space, attic, chimney or other hidden area.

• Follow your dryer manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the venting system. Depending on use, the ductwork should be cleaned every one to two years.



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