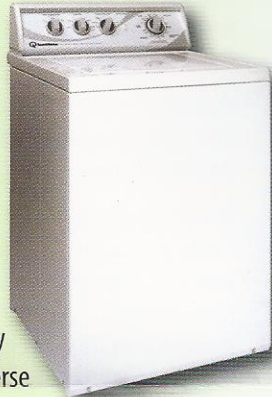


## Top-Load or Front-Load?

In 1996, top-load washers were pretty much the only type of washer around, and they were uniformly high quality. When Consumer Reports tested 18 models, 13 were "excellent" and 5 were "very good." By 2007, though, not one was excellent and 7 out of 21 were "fair" or "poor." How's that for progress?

The culprit is the federal government's obsession with energy efficiency. Efficiency standards for washing machines aren't as well-known as those for light bulbs. But in their quiet destruction of a highly affordable, perfectly satisfactory appliance, washer standards demonstrate the harmfulness of the ever-growing body of efficiency mandates.



Front-loaders meet federal standards more easily than top-loaders. Because they don't fully immerse their laundry loads, they use less hot water and therefore less energy. But, as Americans are increasingly learning, front-loaders are expensive, often have mold problems, and don't let you toss in a wayward sock after they've started.

When the Department of Energy began raising the standard, it promised that "consumers will have the same range of clothes washer as they have today," and cleaning ability wouldn't be changed. That's not how it turned out.

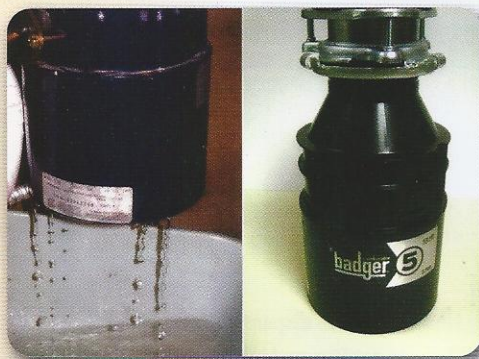
In 2007, after the more stringent rules had kicked in, Consumer Reports noted that some top-loaders were leaving its test swatches "nearly as dirty as they were before washing." "For the first time in years," CR said, "we can't call any washer a Best Buy." Contrast that with the magazine's 1996 report that, "given warm enough water and a good detergent, any washing machine will get clothes clean."

In the early 1900s inventors started inventing appliances to make our lives easier and less mundane. For many decades these products were improved so products worked better for the use they were intended. They were made strong to last and designed for a long working life. Those were the good old days.

The front-load washer has plagued the industry since its origination. The only product that I currently recommend that has maintained satisfactory quality and washability, is the top-load Speed Queen washer, which is available from Soukup's Appliance in Glen Ellyn, IL.

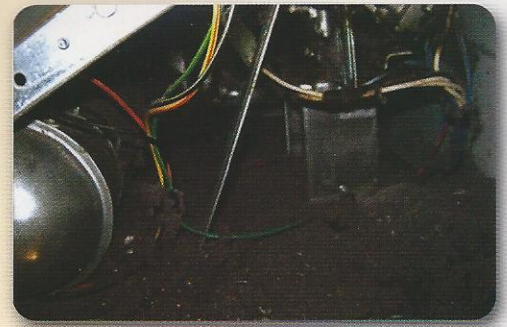
## Disposal Dilemma

Garbage disposal leaks are always a problem, leaking under the kitchen sink can cause cabinet damage. If your unit is more than ten years old it's probably ready for replacement. I can install a new Insinkerator Badger 5 unit for you. It has stainless steel blades and comes with a two year warranty.



## Dryer Fires Can Be Prevented

Many homes are built with long vents causing a build up of lint in the dryer. Open flames present inside the dryer burner can ignite this lint causing a fire inside the unit that can spread to the house. Has your unit ever been cleaned inside? I can clean out the blower and burner areas of your machine making it safe for operation. Never leave your washer or dryer running when you are not home.



## BUY DOWN

My recommendation is to buy lower priced models of new appliances. Energy efficient models and advanced models that operate off the energy grid are the new sales gimmick. There is even a few models that when they stop working, they offer a fault code. You can dial up the manufacturer and hold your cell phone in front of the appliance for it to self-diagnose. Unfortunately, it can't fix itself. New washers control water temps regardless of what you want. When cold is selected the machine is designed to give you 70 degree water, and warm is only about 93, and hot is 107 - not very hot by most people's standards. Constantly I hear from clients who say I don't like it if I can't open the washer to add items or shorten the cycle, or just be able to control it. The machine is controlling me! Basic models work better, are more dependable, last longer and are cheaper to repair if necessary. More and more of my customers, after having a bad experience with the feature laden machines, are calling up to ask what equipment is available that is less problematic and works well. Our website has good information on what models to pick and which are a bad choice.

## TIP

Don't forget to un-hook hoses and sump pump lines to avoid frozen pipes.

