

Michigan Winter Dryer Vent Safety Checklist

For Macomb County homeowners - print-only checkboxes

Checked on: _____

Vent exit: Wall [] Roof [] Not sure []

EMERGENCY: If you see smoke or flames, get everyone outside and call 911 from a safe place. If you smell burning or believe the dryer is overheating, stop using it and seek appropriate help.

Before winter

- ☐ Locate the exterior dryer outlet from a safe, accessible position.
- ☐ Do not disturb a nest, animal, or outlet that is not safely accessible from ground level. Seek appropriate help.
- ☐ Only with no warning signs or known blockage, observe the flap from ground level during normal operation.
- ☐ Without moving the dryer or touching gas or electrical connections, inspect only visible connector sections for damage.
- ☐ Keep the accessible area around the dryer free of lint and combustible clutter.
- ☐ Plan periodic cleaning, especially when drying time has increased.

After snow, ice, or drifting

- ☐ Check that snow, ice, or drifting has not covered the exterior outlet.
- ☐ From ground level, brush away only loose snow; do not force, strike, or dismantle the hood or flap.
- ☐ Recheck after shoveling or plowing moves snow against the home.
- ☐ Only with no smoke, burning odor, unusual heat, damage, or known blockage, observe the flap from ground level during normal operation.
- ☐ Stop using the dryer if the outlet remains blocked or no exhaust air is escaping.

Every load

- ☐ Clean the lint filter before or after each load.
- ☐ Never operate the dryer without its lint filter.
- ☐ Follow the manufacturer instructions and avoid overloading the dryer.
- ☐ Turn the dryer off before leaving home or going to bed.

Warning signs needing appropriate follow-up

- ☐ Clothes remain damp or take longer than normal to dry.
- ☐ The outside flap does not open while the dryer is running.
- ☐ Little or no exhaust air is escaping outdoors.
- ☐ The visible duct is crushed, kinked, disconnected, or damaged.
- ☐ Snow, ice, a nest, or other debris is blocking the outlet.
- ☐ You smell burning or believe the dryer is overheating.

Safety notes and official sources

Keep this page with the checklist. It explains the limits behind the short print prompts and links to the accessible online version.

Do not climb, dismantle, or improvise

Do not climb onto a snowy or icy roof, force a frozen flap, or open concealed ducting. Do not disturb an animal, active nest, eggs, or chicks; seek appropriate wildlife help. Do not add wire screen or cloth over the outlet; U.S. Fire Administration guidance warns that these materials can collect lint and clog the vent. Clearing exterior snow does not prove that the full duct is clean.

Cleaning or physical repair?

Cleaning may fit when lint or removable debris restricts an otherwise sound exhaust path. Physical repair or installation may be needed when ducting is crushed, disconnected, damaged, unsuitable, or paired with a stuck or damaged exterior termination. These are discussion prompts, not a diagnosis; only an appropriately qualified provider that evaluates the situation can determine the cause and scope.

Official sources

- [Michigan LARA-hosted NFPA clothes-dryer safety handout](#)
- [U.S. Fire Administration: keep dryer vents clear of snow and debris](#)
- [U.S. Fire Administration clothes-dryer safety flyer](#)
- [U.S. Fire Administration report on residential clothes-dryer fires](#)
- [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission dryer safety alert](#)



Accessible online checklist

<https://macombdryervent.com/michigan-winter-dryer-vent-safety-checklist>

The online page contains the complete checklist, descriptive links, source context, and current revision date. The QR code is a convenience, not the only way to reach it.

Independent referral disclosure

Macomb Dryer Vent Guide is an independent information and referral website operated by The Local Lookout LLC. It is not a fire department, government agency, emergency service, or dryer vent cleaning company. No provider is currently assigned. If a future provider is identified and the homeowner separately agrees to sharing, that provider may pay The Local Lookout LLC a fixed monthly marketing fee. The provider would be responsible for any assessment, recommendations, quote, contract, work, invoice, and warranty.

This checklist is a general homeowner aid, not an inspection, diagnosis, guarantee, code determination, or substitute for manufacturer instructions or emergency help. Sources checked September 2, 2026.