

Laundry Room Vents / Hot Air heat

I got a call this past December asking me why there is a vent or vents in the laundry room with cold air coming from them. All gas burning appliances require oxygen for a proper, complete and safe combustion process without creating measurable and dangerous amounts of Carbon Monoxide. Combustion air requirements are based on the BTU rating of your appliances (you can find BTU's on the manufacturers name plate attached to the appliance). However, there's a minimum required combustion air supply vent area and specific location which must be



maintained. The code goes something like this. If your furnace and /or water heater are installed in a closet / utility room, the room they are located in must have a minimum of two vents that will supply that air. One interior combustion air vent must be located within 12" from the floor, the second 12"

from the ceiling or on the ceiling of the appliance closet /utility room. A heat register has the adjusting tab whereas the fresh air vent does not. If you block these vents and the dryer & hot water heater go on at the same time you could pull the flame out of your hot water heater and possibly start a fire. Newer hot water heaters are safer in that they take their combustion air from the bottom of the heater through a flame screen. This stops the flame from getting past the screen by cooling it as it goes past the wire mesh. Another problem is the gas of your clothes dryer may not fully burn because of a lack of oxygen and cause yellowing of your clothes and if the machine cannot get enough air, the clothes will take longer to dry. Still another problem from insufficient air is the dryer exhaust may have trouble carrying any loose lint that gets past the

screen trap all the way out of the vent pipe, causing a buildup. It goes without saying that if your hot water heater and gas dryer are in the same room, it is even more important because they both need fresh air to operate. You could accomplish the same thing by keeping your laundry room door open but then you would be using air you already paid to heat or cool and pumping it to the outside.

Another question I was asked was why our homes are so cold in the winter. First, the ducts are in the attic where it's colder than a witch's ear lobe. Second, the ducts are too long. I bet you can cut four feet off some of them, I did. The guys laying out the ducts weren't paying for the material so they didn't care how long they were. While you or one of your kids are up there,



check to see if any of the hose ducts are severely kinked and that they are all still attached to the plenum. The duct hoses are attached to the plenum outlets with plastic tie wraps (instead of clamps) and one or more may have slipped off. Also some of our registers are on outside walls. That

means the heat (forced air) has to travel down 8 feet of un-insulated wall space before the cold attic air from the hose ducts gets there waiting for the warm air from the furnace. I had a particularly bad one that literally gave my wife the chills. It was on an outside wall in our kitchen, furthest from the furnace and when the heat came on, what a cold draft came out of there! That one I closed off altogether and changed it to come out of a new overhead ceiling register instead. I filled the vent area in the wall with insulation. Also, and this is very, very important. Make sure your humidifier is working. It can make it feel 5 degrees cooler if it's not.

Check your humidistat by turning the knob and listening for a click, it should click at about the 30 to 35% reading in this weather, no lower. Also if your nose is dry, your skin is cracking or if you are noticing static electricity, these are all signs of a poorly or not operating humidifier. The Cutts, next door, have baseboard heat and they are complaining about being cold all the time too, some rooms worse than others. That's the problem with slabs; basements allow the floors to stay warmer. Lastly, make sure all the upper registers are closed and the lower ones are not blocked by furniture or drapes. And close the doors to rooms you are not using. I just assume you change or clean you air handler filters at least twice a year.

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Or here - <http://www.bellboatbob.com/fairwaysmaintenance.htm>