

# LAUNDRY ROOM CLEAN UP

Plan it properly and time spent in the laundry room will seem less of a chore.

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**B**uilding a laundry room involves more than just throwing your washer and dryer into a corner of your basement with a box of detergent. A state-of-the-art front loader alone does not a laundry room make. There are building codes to consider, appliances to vent and design hurdles to jump. “New laundry room renovations require building, plumbing and electrical permits,” says John Osborne of Osborne Contracting Inc. in Toronto. “You’ll also need a licensed professional electrician and plumber to do much of the work to ensure that everything’s done to code.”

Laundry room building codes require a doorway large enough to accommodate a 30-inch-wide machine (or wider), a plumbing vent to allow air to escape from the system and a floor drain, should an overflow occur.

As expected, things get a bit trickier when it comes to plumbing and electrical. Your washer will need hot and cold water supply lines as well as a drain for used wash water. Dryer requirements vary depending on type. If you have a gas dryer, you’ll need a separate circuit (no sharing with the washer) and a gas line run-



ning to the machine. Electric dryers require a 220-volt line to the dryer as well as a 30-amp dryer receptacle for the plug.

“No matter what type of dryer you have, it must be vented to the outside,” stresses Osborne. “Vents cannot be longer than 25 feet, and because turns restrict airflow, the vent pipe should be as straight as possible—every 90-degree turn in the vent will knock five feet off your limit.”

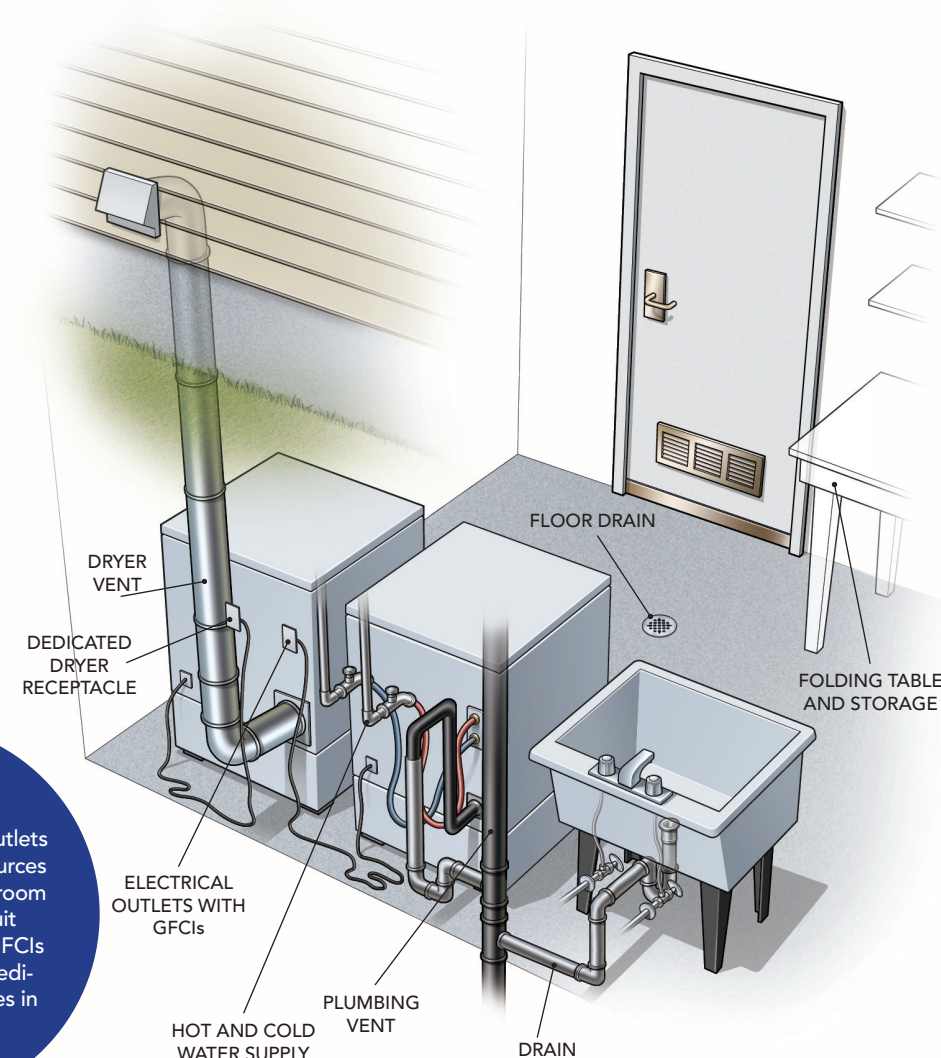
Laundry room safeguards worth looking into are washing machine drip pans and electronic shutoff

valves, which automatically stop the flow of water when they sense a leak, says Osborne.

Once you’ve nailed down the permits, codes and plumbing issues, give some attention to the design and layout of the room. The same consideration you’d give to functionality in kitchen design is now being put to work in the laundry room to determine washer and dryer placement in relation to the sink, folding table, shelves and storage. The improved functionality will result in a laundry room you actually want to be in. □

## ADDITIONAL DRYER VENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ Should be constructed of minimum of 0.016-inch-thick (0.4 mm) rigid metal ducts.
- ✓ Must have smooth interior surfaces with joints running in the direction of airflow.
- ✓ Do not use sheet-metal screws or other fasteners that extend into the duct.
- ✓ Check the dryer manufacturer’s instructions.



**MIKE SAYS**  
“Make sure outlets near water sources such as in the laundry room have ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs will cut off power immediately if any water comes in contact with them.”