

## Rental Watch

Dear AOA:

I have a concrete deck on my rental property that has drains along the perimeter of the patio. My problem is when it rains even moderately, the drains clog up and the patio floods. I have snaked the drain lines so I know they are clear. I cannot always be at my property when it rains to clear the grates. What can I do to make these drains work more like I think they should work? R.K.

For answers to this question and the ones that follow, we turned to licensed contractors and maintenance specialists Jerry L'Ecuire. AOA

Dear R.K.:

Luckily your drains are at the perimeter and not in the middle of the deck. This will make the fix much easier. We have a few ideas that should work for you. First if possible, wash down your deck of any debris before any predicted rainstorms. Granted that may not be convenient, but it is easier than doing it during a rainstorm! If your drains are located away from any walking areas, remove the flat grate and replace it with a dome shaped drain grate. This will allow more water to drain before the grate is overcome with debris. In addition to the raised grate, you may want to incorporate a "French Drain" system into your existing drain lines. Find the area along your patio that collects the most water; dig a trench 10 inches deep by 6 inches wide. Fill the trench with rock or gravel up to the bottom level of your pipe. Make sure your pipe slopes or drains into your existing drain lines. Most hardware stores carry a 3 or 4-inch drainpipe that has perforations already drilled into the pipe. Wrap the line with a mesh bag or permeable filter material to keep out any soil or debris from entering the pipe. Cover the pipe with rock or gravel and top with soil or ground cover. Connecting into your existing drains lines should not be difficult, as most patio drains systems are not glued together. Simply "TEE" into an existing line.

Dear AOA:

I have coin-op laundry machines at my building. The dryer is making a lot of squealing noises and now the drum has stopped turning. Do I need a new machine or can this be fixed? R.Y.

Dear R.Y.:

Your problem is not too complicated. From the sounds of it, we bet that the drum support bearings are worn out and the drive belt around the drum is broken. You could call the repairman to fix it, but that would be no fun. Despite the size of the machine, it is quite easy to fix. First, unplug the electric line and shut off the gas to the dryer. If the lint screen is located at the top of the machine, open the door, remove the lint screen, and remove the screws holding the lint screen housing. Now carefully pry the top of the machine away from the body of the dryer. This is best accomplished with a flat pry bar and a bit of tape on the end to protect the top. Once you pry open the two front corners up, the lid will swing all the way back. Either lean it against the wall or have someone hold it. This will reveal the drum. To gain access to the drum, remove the screws or bolts that hold the front panel. Carefully remove the front panel, the drum will drop down and can be removed easily. Once the drum is out of the way, look at the back wall of the machine and find the two rollers that support the back of the drum. Either a nut or "C" clip holds the rollers in. Replace the rollers with new ones to stop the squealing. This is also a good time to inspect the drum belt idler pulley near the motor and replace it if needed. Re-install the drum onto the back rollers and slip on the new belt aligning it with the wear marks on the drum. Put the ribbed side of the belt against the drum and slide the belt under the idler pulley. You are now ready to put it all back together. As you replace the front panel, gently support the drum and center it onto the front panel opening. Reverse all dismantling steps and put the machine back in service. This job may sound complicated, but there are very few parts and they almost fall into place.

Dear AOA:

I have just finished cleaning the gas stove in my rental unit and now the burner will not light. The pilot light is ok, but the burner will just not light automatically. What did I do wrong? S.Y.

Dear S.Y.:

The burner might be too clean!! Start at the pilot flame and follow the pilot tube to the burner. Look at the side of the burner with a bright light where the pilot tube and the burner meet. You should see small inlet holes that lead up the side of the burner. These holes may be clogged with soap or other debris. Use a toothpick or straight pin to clean out the holes. These tiny holes are used by the pilot flame to climb up the assemble and ignite the burner. Inspect the whole burner assemble and poke out each jet if the flame does not go all the way around the burner when ignited.

*Remember that every property and situation is different so when making building and/or equipment changes, make sure you know your local code compliance laws, uniform building codes and NFPA safety standards. Always consult with a licensed contractor, building inspector and/or related professional if you have a particular problem. If you are in need of a licensed, insured contractor or inspector, you might want to call Contractors Referral service toll free at 1-866-769-7523.*