

HOW SAFE IS YOUR LAUNDRY?

Store safety is an often overlooked but very important aspect of running a successful coin-op. At least once a year, take a critical look at your laundry to make sure it is as safe for your customers and employees as it can possibly be.

Lighting

In general the safest coin laundries are extremely well lit, inside and out. Lots of lights decrease slip and fall type of accidents, keep loitering and vandalism to a minimum, and make the laundry look cleaner. Replace the plastic light covers in the ceiling if they have yellowed, and make sure **both** fluorescent lights are on in each fixture, not just one.

Have your outside lights on a timer so they turn on automatically at dusk. Lastly, work with your landlord to keep your parking lot brightly lit. Enlist the help of other tenants if necessary.

Floors

Exercise caution whenever your floors are wet and train your employees to do the same. Repair leaky machines quickly, and keep extra towels on hand to soak up water until the machine is fixed. Invest in a couple of free-standing signs cautioning customers that the floors are wet, and use them whenever your floors are mopped or wet for any reason.

Machines

Machines that are working properly are safe, as long as they are operated with common sense in mind. Never bypass any of the built-in safety devices on your machines. Periodically check to make sure your top loaders stop spinning when the lid is raised, and that all front load doors remain locked during the entire cycle, both important safety features.

After drying clothes, remove them from the dryer and allow time to cool down thoroughly before

wrapping them, to avoid any possibility of spontaneous combustion.

Train employees to turn off the circuit breaker of a machine if necessary, and to know how to turn off the main water valve in case of a flood.

Children

Help your customers keep their children safe while visiting your laundry by insisting that children be closely supervised. Don't allow kids to sit or stand on machines. Never allow children in the rolling carts, as they tip easily. Children can be seriously injured if allowed behind the dryers or the front loaders. Keeping your dryer access door padlocked and a plywood panel screwed in between rows of front loaders is simple and effective.

One of the best ways to keep children safe and happy in your store is to set aside an area for them that has coloring books, safe toys, small seats, etc. and is separate from the machines. (This has the added bonus of allowing their parents to concentrate on their wash and folding, which will help shorten your machines' turnaround time).

Be Prepared

Recognize that accidents do happen occasionally. Prepare for the unexpected by keeping a first aid kit stocked and handy. Also keep emergency numbers posted and easily visible. Post lighted exit signs on the proper doors, and keep those doors unlocked and free of clutter during business hours. Lastly, check that fire extinguishers work properly.