



Serving the Puget Sound area since 1947



## CONSUMER CORNER

### Should We Repair that Appliance or Replace It?



Careful consideration is necessary before you decide whether to repair or replace! And - for heaven's sake—don't junk your major appliances automatically when something goes wrong. Don't just assume the worst!

Explore the repair options first with a trained technician so that you have something to compare to the cost of a new appliance. And don't forget that there's more to a new appliance purchase than just the initial cost. What about delivery, installation, water hookups, built-in appliance measuring and refitting, custom panels, also disposing of that old appliance?

Generally, many repairs cost less than 15-20% of the overall cost of replacement. A repair/replace threshold of 50% or more of the overall cost of a new appliance is a good rule of thumb. However, there are many good reasons to proceed with repairing well beyond that percentage. Things like good condition, appliance life expectancy, quality of the existing appliance and remodeling considerations are important.

***If you don't know the cost to repair, you cannot make an intelligent choice to REPAIR or REPLACE! It's a tough decision and we can help.***

### MAJOR APPLIANCE MAILBOX

**Q.** Sometimes in other parts of the country I get a 'sticky' feeling after I shower. Why does our local water make us feel more 'slippery' when we shower or bathe? — *Slippery in Seattle*

**A.** Reply is on Page 3



## Becha Didn't Know?

...that these things are actual quotes from respected people. Just goes to show, no one can predict the future!!

### UNBELIEVABLE QUOTES (not to mention, inaccurate!)

In 1899 -

“Everything that can be invented has already been invented.”

- Charles Duell, U.S. Patent Office Commissioner

In 1943 -

“I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”

- Thomas Watson, IBM chairman

In 1977 -

“There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.”

- Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment, a mainframe-producer

In 1981 -

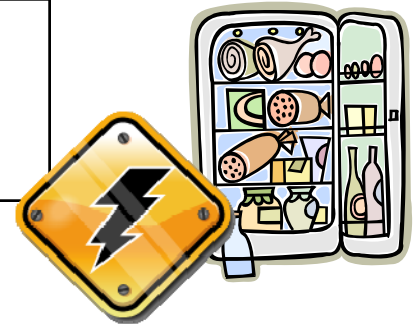
“No one will need more than 637 kb of memory for a personal computer – 640K ought to be enough for anybody.”

- Bill Gates, Microsoft

*(FYI: The newest Microsoft operating system requires 700 times this memory)*

## *All About ...*

### *Power Outages and your Refrigerator and Freezer!*



The following information is important to remember if you encounter a prolonged power outage:

Note the time the power outage begins.

Discontinue all cooking operations and discard any food that has not yet reached the final cooking temperature. Do not place hot food in refrigerators or freezers, as this will rapidly raise the temperature inside the refrigerator or freezer and may make more food unusable.

Use ice or/ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food.

Potentially hazardous foods are those foods such as high protein foods (meat, eggs, dairy) and cooked vegetables that support the rapid and progressive growth of disease causing bacteria. Food borne illnesses can be caused by bacteria that can multiply rapidly in foods when the food is held in the temperature danger zone (41° to 140°F). Refrigerated potentially hazardous foods must be stored at or below 41°F. Frozen foods must be maintained frozen. Hot cooked potentially hazardous food must be maintained at 140°F or above.

Leave your freezer door closed. A full freezer should keep food safe about two days -- a half-full freezer, about one day. Add bags of ice or dry ice to the freezer if it appears the power will be off for an extended time. You can safely re-freeze thawed foods that still contain ice crystals and are 41°F or less.

Food in refrigerators should be safe as long as the power is out no more than about four to six hours. Leave the door closed; every time you open it, needed cold air escapes, causing the foods inside to reach unsafe temperatures. If it appears the power will be off for more than six hours, use a pan or large dish and place ice (chunk is best) or frozen gel packs in the refrigerator section. That will keep potentially hazardous foods at 41° or below. Discard any potentially hazardous food that has been above 41°F for four hours or more, reached a temperature of 45°F or higher for any length of time, or has an unusual color, odor, or texture.

#### **THE RULE: When in doubt, throw it out!**

**DISCARD** the following foods in refrigerators and freezers if kept over four hours at above 41°F, or if the temperature exceeds 45°F for any length of time.:

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and egg substitutes - raw or cooked

Milk, cream and soft cheese

Casseroles, stews or soups

Lunch meats and hot dogs

Custard, chiffon, pumpkin or cheese pies

Cream-filled pastries and cream sauces

Cookie dough made with eggs

Whipped Butter

Cut Melons

Cooked vegetables

**SAVE** the following foods even though they may have been kept at room temperature a few days:

Butter or margarine

Hard and processed cheeses

Fresh uncut fruits and vegetables

Dried fruits and coconut

Opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressings, jelly, relish, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives and peanut butter

Fruit juices

Fresh herbs and spices

Fruit pies, breads, rolls, and muffins

Cakes, except cream cheese frosted or cream-filled

Flour and nuts



## DISASTER DONATION SCAMS... BE CAREFUL!!!

With the recent disasters in Haiti and South America and more terrible disasters likely inevitable, you need to protect yourself and your donation. Try these tips:

### *Check with the BBB*

The Better Business Bureau uses the same metrics they apply to Fortune 500 companies to issue reports on charities. Organizations volunteer their information to be verified by a local or national BBB organization. Check their updated list to confirm your charity or organization is operating in good standing.

### *Give to a charity already established at the disaster site*

There are local organizations that have served every community. In times of crisis, international organizations aid the local workers who have direct access to the area. Give directly to organizations with an infrastructure, staff, and direct connection to people of the disaster area. InterAction is a clearinghouse for U.S.-based

non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It's a forum where leaders working on specific issues share best practices. They use their worldwide membership directory to highlight resident NGOs in a disaster zone. The NGOs offer a direct response to damaged areas as well as an account of areas in need.

### *Use Charity Navigator*

Charity Navigator is staffed with forensic accountants who analyze financial documents of NGOs and charities. These expert sleuths work to account for how each cent of donated money is used. If you have doubts about a charity, run the name through the navigator.

### *Check status at GuideStar*

GuideStar documents organizations tax return forms and other information associated with their EIN. Look for organizations that give at least 75 percent of their funding directly to

their causes. If more than 25 percent is spent on administration costs, it means the organization is heavily staffed, but may not be equipped for direct response to disasters.

### *Be wary of direct solicitations*

Few small organizations sponsor telephone drives in this Internet age. Be wary of callers reading from a script to donate to a disaster area. These people set up private businesses with names that sound like relief organizations. Once credit card information is given, it's routed to a personal account rather than an organization. Also be leery of urgent email and texting campaigns. Your phone service provider may charge you hidden fees in order to complete the transaction. Established organizations use mainstream media channels to alert you of their need for donations.

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## *MAJOR APPLIANCE MAILBOX (cont'd from page 1)*

**A.** Dear *Slippery in Seattle*:

Whether you prefer the 'sticky' clean of hard water or the 'slippery' clean of softer water, when you are confronted with a change it is 'hard' (no pun intended) to get used to. When we travel to areas where the water is 'hard' many of us don't like the feeling of the harder water.

The reason for this 'slippery' feeling after bathing in our local, softer water, is that there are fewer common hardness minerals like calcium and magnesium. Soap can work very efficiently and eliminate "soap curd". Soap curd is what causes the common 'bathtub ring'. When you bathe and rinse in soft water, there is no residual soap curd on your body. That 'slick' feeling is your skin – lubricated with its own natural oils! Most of us enjoy our naturally soft water and can really notice the difference when we travel.



## CUT ENERGY COSTS



In the summer we have lower heating bills but try these energy-saving tips to try to save some bucks and they will last all year.

- Standby power is responsible for 5-10% of total electricity use in most homes. Plug equipment like TV's and DVD's into a power strip and then turn off the power strip. That's like totally unplugging the device. Experts claim that it costs more money to power DVD players when they're off than when they're in use!
- Change your light bulbs to high-efficiency, compact fluorescent bulbs. They use 1/4 of the electricity and last up to 10 times longer.
- Change your thermostat setting by a few degrees.
- Turn down the temperature on your water heater by a few degrees.
- Keep fireplace dampers closed to lessen heating and cooling costs.
- Use three-way bulbs to adjust lighting levels to your needs.
- Turn off lights in a room that is not in use.
- Have the furnace and major appliances maintained regularly by a professional. They can notice things that we do not that need to be corrected and can dramatically increase efficiency.
- Keep the curtains open in rooms with southern exposure during the winter and closed in the summer.
- Don't run kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans for extended periods. They can remove heated or air-conditioned air that you spent good money to heat or cool.

## TRIVIA QUIZ



Are you football fans ready to be shocked?

After subtracting the minutes devoted to commercials, replays, players standing around or in the huddle, cheerleader shots, analysis, sideline reports and crowd shots—

HOW MANY MINUTES OF ACTUAL PLAYING TIME OCCURS DURING A THREE-HOUR FOOTBALL BROADCAST?

Ready to be shocked:

10 minutes and 43 seconds



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Or you can call us at 206-365-9310.