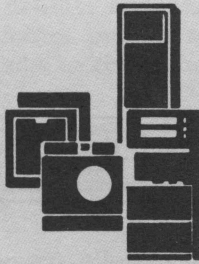


# FACT SHEET

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L-1180



## WASHERS

Janice Garrett\*

Today's automated modern laundry equipment, now a major time and energy saver, has revolutionized home laundry routines. But in considering the degree of automation to buy, the added cost of more automatic features should be balanced against the time and convenience gained.

### Basic Types of Washers

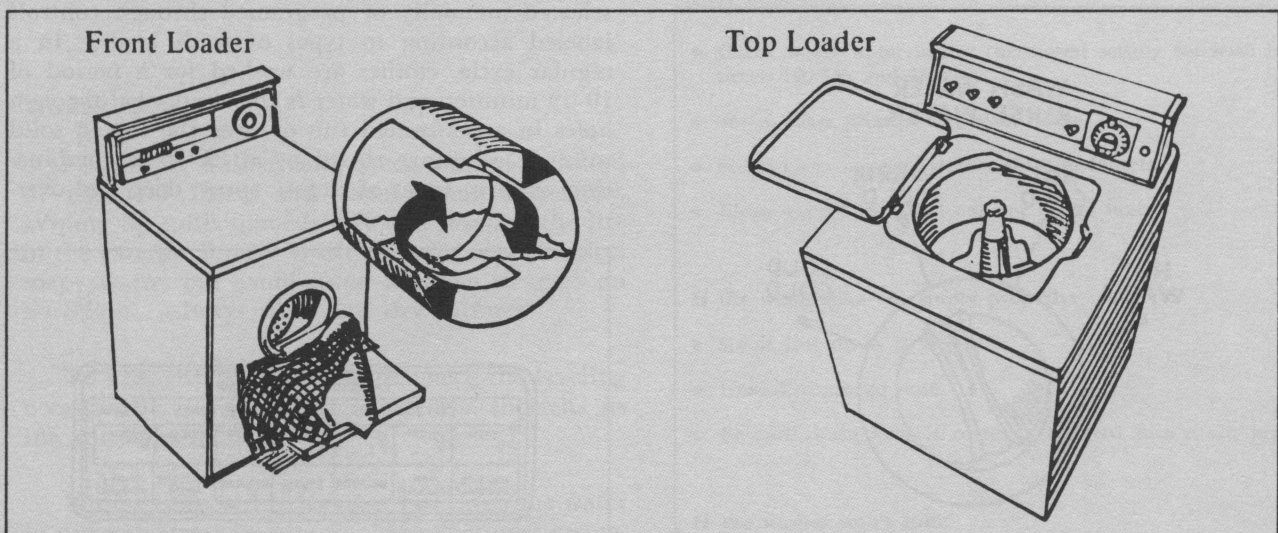
When shopping for washers, the buyer must decide first whether a top loader or a front loader is more desirable.

*Top loaders.* In a top-loading washer, laundry is placed around an upright agitator in the center of the tub. The tub is stationary, and an agitator with finlike extensions circulates the water and detergent throughout the clothes to produce washing action.

The top loader can be loaded and unloaded from a standing position, can use both high- or low-sudsing detergents, provides two speeds to adjust to fabric types, requires no extra floor space for the door to open and usually offers a greater load capacity than the front loader. Articles may be put in or removed at any point of the cycle without spilling water, but caution must be taken in keeping the load balanced.

*Front loaders.* In a front-loading washer, baffle extensions in a rotating tub help tumble and lift the clothes to produce the washing action.

Front loaders usually use less water and detergent since high-sudsing detergents interfere with the washing action, but they usually offer only one wash and spin speed. Tops of the front loaders can be used as work surfaces, but clothes added during the cycle can cause water spillage or unbalance the load.



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## Construction Features

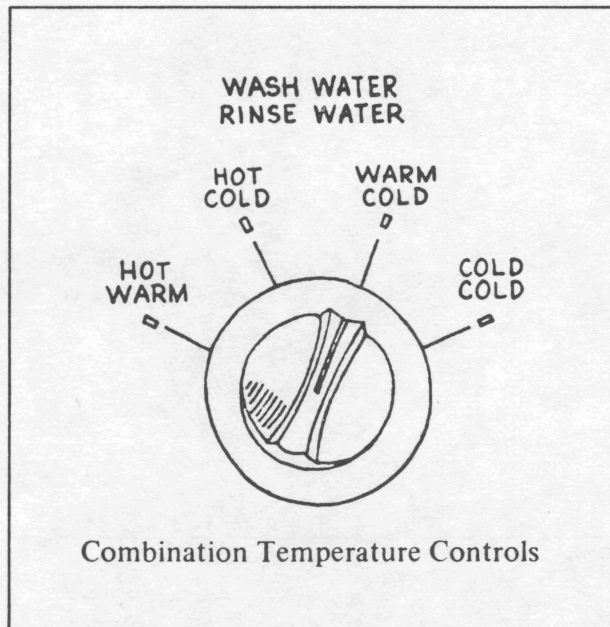
Quality, durability and safety of construction are important in a washer selection. Because of exposure to water, high humidity and laundry chemicals, a buyer should choose smooth and durable construction materials that resist chipping and rusting. Exteriors are usually porcelain enamel, with porcelain-on-steel lids and interiors.

- Since washers are available that handle up to 20-pound loads of dry wash, check the product hang-tag for the maximum load desired, or note the water-level indicators on the controls or examine the tub to see if the washer will be large enough to handle normal loads.
- Also, check controls to select those that are easy to read and operate.
- A washer should have a testing laboratory seal such as that issued by Underwriters' Laboratories to assure safe electrical and mechanical construction. Other added safety features are a lid cutoff switch and an unbalanced load switch.

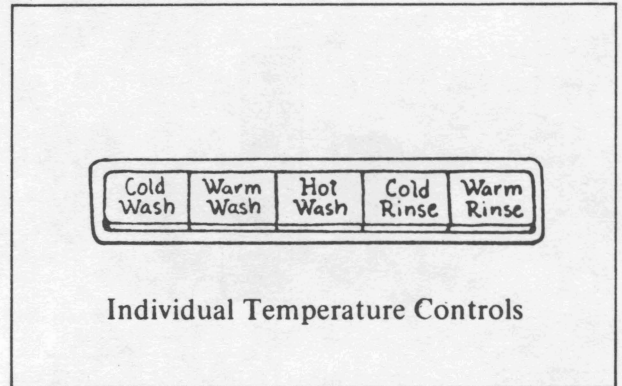
## Selective Controls

Selecting a washer with controls that will provide the desired automation within budget limitations is a basic key to buying. Washers with maximum automation are the most expensive.

*Water temperature.* Most washers provide three water temperatures: hot, warm and cold, with some having combination or individual wash and rinse



temperature controls. The individual control is the most flexible type.



*Water fill.* The two methods for water fill are (1) pressure (meter) fill and (2) time fill.

### Pressure Fill

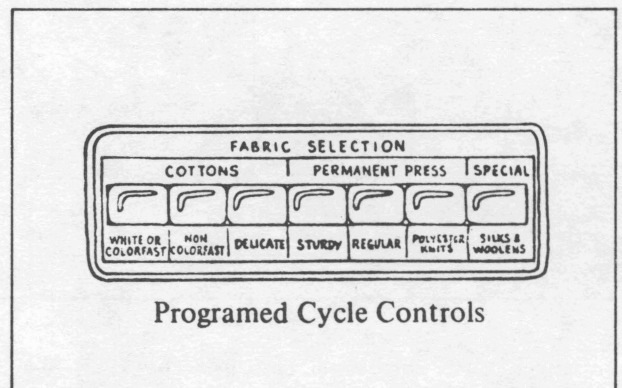
A mechanism allows water to run until the selected level is reached. If water pressure in your home is low, it is wise to buy this type washer.

### Time Fill

Water runs for a predetermined period regardless of level reached. If water pressure is low, manual fill operation may be necessary.

It is wise to select a washer that permits a selection of water levels to match the size of the load. Though initial cost may be higher, savings are effected on water and laundry aids used, and clothes will look better and last longer.

*Wash and rinse cycles.* Washers provide a variety of wash and rinse cycles which may be selected manually or programmed through controls labeled according to types of wash loads. In a regular cycle, clothes are washed for a period of 10-14 minutes, and water is then extracted through holes in a perforated tub or over the top in solid tubs. Clothes are rinsed by all or some combination of three types of rinses: spray, deep and over-



flow. This is followed by a spin cycle which extracts most of the water to allow for easier drying.

Some washers provide special cycles for permanent-press and delicate and knit fabrics; and for heavily soiled clothes, presoak and prewash cycles. These features add to cost of washers.

### Special Features

Special dispensers allow you to add detergent, bleach and fabric softeners at the beginning of the cycle. The washer then dispenses these at the appropriate time. A mini-wash cycle using a basket which fits inside the larger tub or with controlled-water level permits smaller loads. Lint filters collect and keep lint from redepositing on the clothes. Other features may include leveling feet to insure proper balance, interior lights and suds-saver cycle allowing reuse of water and detergent.

### Installation

Washers should be installed in accordance with local plumbing and electrical codes. Required are hot and cold water under pressure, a drain connection and a leveling device for proper spin balance of the tub. Washers should be plugged into a grounded, 3-hole outlet on a separate 15- or 20-ampere circuit.

### Washer Care

For proper washer care, check for lint collected in tub and filter, and clean them frequently. Wiping up spills immediately will prolong the life of the exterior finish. Wash the outside with warm soapy water, but avoid using abrasive cleaners on porcelain. Always rinse and dry surfaces.

To keep machine in balance, check the leveling occasionally. Overloading a machine shortens its life considerably.

Washers exposed to weather can cause the water in pipes to freeze in winter. Manufacturers recommend burning a light bulb underneath washers in garages or on porches. Since hoses are usually made of rubber and can burst under continual pressure,

turn off water controls on the washer after each use.

The average life expectancy of a washer is 9 to 11 years, but proper care will insure a continued good appearance and longer performance.

### Before Calling the Repairman

Forty percent of all service calls are about simple matters which you can check and correct without calling a serviceman, but machines with many controls require more service than simple machines. Consider ease of servicing when you buy your washer. Some machines have front and/or removable service panels that permit quick access to motors and pumps. Most washers have permanently lubricated motors.

#### If washer won't run:

- Fully depress control button or completely turn dial.
- Firmly insert electric plug into outlet.
- See if fuse is blown or circuit breaker tripped.
- Balance load.
- Decrease load in tub.

#### If you are not getting enough water or enough hot water:

- See that hoses are attached to right faucets.
- Turn both faucets on fully.
- Unkink intake hose.
- Check home water heater thermostat setting for level between 140° F. and 160° F.
- See if water pressure is low in house.
- See if hoses are connected tightly to faucets.
- Clean screens in faucet ends of intake hoses.

#### If the water does not empty properly:

- See if lint drain is clogged.
- Unkink drainage hose.
- Be sure drain hose is correctly inserted into drain pipe.

#### If the washer won't spin:

- Be sure lid and door are closed.
- Rearrange clothes if load is unbalanced.

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The following Extension fact sheets discuss selection, use and care of home appliances.

- L-1139 Selection, Use and Care of Major Home Appliances
- L-1168 Refrigerators and Freezers
- L-1179 Decisions about Dishwashers
- L-1180 Washers
- L-1181 Dryers
- L-1182 Disposers and Compacters
- L-1240 Ranges
- L-1241 Microwave Appliances

These are available from your county Extension office.

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The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Lynn Bourland, Lillian Cochran and Doris Myers, Extension home management specialists, The Texas A&M University System, in the preparation of this publication. Illustrations were adapted from publications issued by the General Services Administration, Arthur F. Sampson, acting administrator, Washington, D.C., 1972.

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