

Clean up your act

Proper laundry-room etiquette can be essential to surviving the clothes-washing experience

BY BROOKE HOLBERT
The Battalion

Beneath the unassuming guise of a community laundry room stands a place where people's garments are seen by all and the shirt off a man's back is no longer safe from size and color distortion.

Like the post office and the Memorial Student Center (MSC), most students have visited residence hall laundermats. A foreign activity to college rookies, cleaning one's own clothes is yet another new aspect of post-high school independence.

As basic and standard as doing laundry may seem, there does exist an unofficial code of conduct that Mom may not have passed on to her college-bound Aggie.

Do not mess with other people's laundry.

Like teachers emphasized in second grade, one should try to keep one's hands to oneself.

"I was just a few minutes late one time, and someone yanked my clothes out and left them soaking wet on top of the washer," said Tina Palmero, a freshman general studies major. "They were soaking wet. That's obnoxious. The least they could have done was set them in the dryer."

Some assertive launderers may even discard a load of clothes mid-cycle if it interferes with their schedule.

"I was washing my sheets and towels and made sure to come and check on them 10 minutes before they were due to come out," said Ashley Williams, a freshman business major. "I get there, and someone has taken them out of the machine before they were done and had put their stuff in. It cost me time and money. ... It makes you want to retaliate."

Unless the wash load has been completely abandoned, it may be best to allow an individual some time to retrieve it before commanding the machine. It is more than a little violating when one discovers that his or her underwear has been handled by strangers.

Check your wake.

In any heavily utilized facility, the biohazard level is going to be high. Some basic upkeep is generally expected of everyone.

"I once found this streaky mess in the bottom of the washer," said Amanda Atkins, a junior English and mathematics major. "I thought it was ink or something, but it turned out to be this big mess of hair. It was so, so gross. I ended up cleaning someone's matted hair out of the washer with a Kleenex."

Do not wash it all at once.

Nothing is worse than being denied a washing unit because some



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

clotheshorse has decided to monopolize the facility with a monstrous wardrobe. It is best not wait until the last minute to wash everything one owns.

"Bringing three and four wash loads at one time is rude — especially when it gets so busy on the weekends," said Melissa Boyce, a freshman geology major. "Two wash loads is fair. If you have a lot to wash, come in and do it every few hours or so."

Do not bare your soul.

While the modern laundry room has taken on a locker-room feel for chewing the fat, there are still those who want to clean in peace.

"I don't think the laundry room is the place to meet people," said Gabe Perez, a senior economics major. "There is nothing wrong with a little friendly conversation, but it's not a singles bar."

Laundry room chitchat can be pleasant, but the forging of new friendships is not always first on everyone's mind. Being aware of others' personal space is key.

"Passing gripes is okay," said Boyce. "I left a pen in the dryer, and I went off on it to some guy. ... He'll never remember me, unless he sees me walking around in pen-stained jeans."

Expect a few sacrifices on Sundays.

If a student has decided that the time to scrub those dirty threads is Sunday night, he or she must be prepared to compromise. There will be a wait. People will be impatient. One load at a time may be the standard operating procedure.

"Sunday nights people get real anal about everything because it is so busy," said Mike Fenton, a junior psychology major. "They start throwing each other's stuff around. I usually try to get it done before then to dodge the bullet."

This unexpected war zone can be avoided by laundering during the week or early in the morning.

Survival in the laundry room rests heavily upon common sense. Gawking at someone's unstylish sweater is rude. A lint filter thick with matted wool seems careless. Sharing successful cleaning tips is not on everyone's agenda. For the most part, however, the college laundry room is relatively free of hassle. People are considerate and clothes-cleaning cat fights are few and far between.

"I hear girls complaining about people moving their clothes around and stuff," said Daniel Ayewah, a freshman aerospace engineering major. "I don't let things get to me. You have to say to yourself, 'I don't want to be annoyed by this.' I've never worried about anyone taking my clothes or anything like that. If they wanted them, they could have them."

However, should sharing a laundry room prove too traumatic, the pre-college standard remains a sure thing: Take it to Mom.

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