

## The Laundry Tray

By Joseph P. Guzzo

Every so often someone comes up with a word or phrase, some stick others fade away. The new one going around is “mybad”, then there is “how cool is that” which may have replaced another saying decades ago. When a product comes along with a cool name it could have an impact on how popular the product becomes. In fact the names of many products have become so popular, they have become synonymous with all other like products. For instance, the Jacuzzi has become synonymous with all whirlpool bathtubs, even though Jacuzzi is just a brand named after the owner Roy Jacuzzi. Then there is the Xerox copy machines, many still say make me a Xerox of that please. And my favorite, the Frigidaire. You see to my Grandmother every refrigerator was a Frigidaire.



So we have this term in our code Laundry Tray passed on from generations that has become synonymous with a washing machine connection. But what exactly is a Laundry Tray?

Back when there weren't any modern automatic washing machines people washed their clothes by hand. In fact even when the automatic washer came out only the well off could afford them. One of the most popular ways to wash clothes was in the kitchen sink, that's right the kitchen sink. The hot plumbing fixture to have was this behemoth double bowl cast iron sink, that weighed more than a bathtub. One side had a regular compartment to do dishes etc, and the other side a deep compartment to wash clothes, you also bathed the children in it. Anyway when the large compartment was not being used, or vice versa, there was this tray that fit nicely over the either compartment. This is where the term laundry tray was invented. The photo shows the old sink unfortunately without the tray. Thanks to my friend Packy for the picture.

The term laundry tray has been synonymous with just about any thing to do with a washing machine or laundry ever since, and codes have used it for years. In fact the early edition of 248 c.m.r. makes reference and gives an exception for the old kitchen sink, *No plumbing fixture which is used for domestic or culinary purposes shall be used to receive the discharge of an indirect waste except that in a residence a kitchen sink is acceptable for use as a receptor for dishwashers and similarly a laundry tray as a receptor for a clothes washing machine.*

There is no definition of laundry tray in any dictionary I could find, nor is there any definition of laundry tray in our code, yet it is commonly mentioned throughout the code. It's even listed as a separate fixture on the permit application, as is a washing machine connection. I did search the web and was able to find one made up definition of a laundry tray from a plumbing supply, *a deep wide sink or tub usually of porcelain, slate, or soapstone used for washing clothes.* This wording was right next to a picture of a utility sink. The utility sink, some call them laundry sinks, is the most common fixture come to be known as a laundry tray.

So the question is should we remove this antiquated term Laundry Tray, and other seldom used or even extinct items from our code? Like clay pipe, sheet lead, lead flange, sisson joint, burned lead joint, just to name a few. I know eventually lead will be soon be a thing of the past, simply because of the dangers and restrictions on lead.

Or maybe we should keep the term Laundry Tray, after all it's a testament to how a simple name can become synonymous, almost standard language in our trade. And for some instill memories of the past, and I think that is just groovy, mybad.

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