

Supco DE138

Supco DE138 Dryer Heater Element Assembly

Installation and Maintenance Guide

1. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides essential information for the safe and effective installation, operation, and maintenance of your Supco DE138 Dryer Heater Element Assembly. This component is designed as a direct replacement for specific Maytag and Whirlpool dryer models, restoring heating functionality to your appliance.

The Supco DE138 is a complete tubular heating element, including a 2-piece tube and coil, engineered to meet or exceed original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specifications.

Compatibility:

- Replaces Maytag part number **303404**
- Replaces Whirlpool part number **303404**
- Replaces Whirlpool part number **313538**

2. SAFETY INFORMATION

WARNING: Risk of Electric Shock, Fire, or Injury.

- **ALWAYS DISCONNECT POWER** to the dryer before attempting any installation, repair, or maintenance. Failure to do so can result in serious injury or death.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including work gloves, to prevent cuts or scrapes from sharp edges.
- Ensure the dryer has cooled down completely before handling any internal components, especially the old heating element, which can retain heat.
- If you are unsure about any part of the installation process, consult a qualified appliance technician.
- Verify that all electrical connections are secure and correctly reconnected before restoring power to the dryer.
- This heating element operates at 240 volts and 5,000 watts. Improper installation can lead to electrical hazards or fire.

3. TOOLS REQUIRED

The following tools are typically required for replacing a dryer heating element. Specific tools may vary depending

on your dryer model.

- Phillips head screwdriver
- Flathead screwdriver
- Nut driver set (common sizes: 1/4", 5/16", 3/8")
- Pliers
- Work gloves
- Multimeter (for testing continuity, optional but recommended)

4. INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Follow these general steps for replacing the dryer heating element. Refer to your specific dryer's service manual for detailed disassembly instructions, as procedures vary by model.

1. **Disconnect Power:** Unplug the dryer from the electrical outlet or turn off the circuit breaker supplying power to the dryer.
2. **Access the Heating Element:**
 - Depending on your dryer model, you may need to remove the rear panel, top panel, front panel, or even the dryer drum to access the heating element housing.
 - Carefully remove any screws, clips, or panels obstructing access.
3. **Locate the Old Heating Element:** The heating element is typically housed in a metal chamber, often located at the rear or bottom of the dryer drum area.
4. **Disconnect Electrical Connections:** Note the position of all wires connected to the old heating element. Take a photo if necessary. Carefully disconnect the wires from the terminals.
5. **Remove the Old Element:** Unscrew or unclip the old heating element assembly from its housing. Carefully pull it out.
6. **Install the New Supco DE138 Element:**
 - Insert the new Supco DE138 heating element assembly into the housing, ensuring it seats correctly.
 - Secure it with the screws or clips removed earlier.
7. **Reconnect Electrical Connections:** Reattach the electrical wires to the corresponding terminals on the new heating element. Ensure connections are tight and secure.
8. **Reassemble the Dryer:** Reinstall all panels, screws, and clips in reverse order of disassembly. Ensure no wires are pinched.
9. **Restore Power and Test:** Plug the dryer back into the electrical outlet or turn on the circuit breaker. Run a short cycle with no load to verify the dryer heats correctly. Check for any unusual noises or smells.



Image 1: The Supco DE138 Dryer Heater Element Assembly. This image displays the complete tubular heating element with its housing, ready for installation. It features the electrical terminals and mounting points.

5. OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (POST-INSTALLATION)

After successful installation of the Supco DE138 heating element, the dryer should operate as intended. Follow these steps to ensure proper function:

1. **Initial Test Run:** After reassembling the dryer and restoring power, run a short cycle (e.g., 10-15 minutes on a high heat setting) with an empty drum.
2. **Verify Heat Production:** After a few minutes, open the dryer door and carefully check if the air inside the drum is warm. Do not touch the heating element directly.
3. **Monitor for Issues:** Listen for any unusual noises, observe for smoke or burning smells (a slight burning smell may occur initially as manufacturing oils burn off, but it should dissipate quickly). If any significant issues arise, immediately disconnect power and re-check your installation.
4. **Normal Use:** Once the test run is successful, the dryer is ready for normal operation.

6. MAINTENANCE

While the heating element itself requires no specific maintenance, regular dryer maintenance is crucial for its longevity and efficient operation.

- **Clean Lint Filter:** Clean the lint filter before or after every load to ensure proper airflow and prevent

overheating.

- **Inspect Dryer Vent:** Periodically inspect and clean the dryer vent ductwork. Blocked vents can cause the dryer to overheat, leading to premature failure of components, including the heating element, and pose a fire hazard.
- **Check for Obstructions:** Ensure there are no obstructions in the dryer's exhaust system.

7. TROUBLESHOOTING

If your dryer is not functioning correctly after replacing the heating element, consider the following common issues:

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Dryer not heating	Loose electrical connections to the element.	Disconnect power. Re-check all wire connections to the heating element. Test thermal fuse and thermostats for continuity with a multimeter. Replace if open.
	Tripped thermal fuse or thermostat (safety components).	
	Faulty cycling thermostat or high-limit thermostat.	
Dryer not starting	No power to the dryer.	Check circuit breaker. Test door switch for continuity. Test thermal fuse for continuity. Replace if open.
	Faulty door switch.	
	Blown thermal fuse (prevents dryer from starting).	
Dryer overheating	Restricted dryer vent.	Clean dryer vent thoroughly. Test thermostats for proper operation. Replace if faulty.
	Faulty operating or high-limit thermostat.	

For issues not listed here, or if troubleshooting does not resolve the problem, it is recommended to consult a professional appliance repair technician.

8. SPECIFICATIONS

Feature	Detail
Brand	Supco
Model Number	DE138
Voltage	240 Volts
Wattage	5,000 Watts
Terminal Studs	13-32
Material	Metal
Product Dimensions	16.1 x 6.8 x 6.8 inches
Item Weight	1.01 pounds
Replaces Part Numbers	Maytag 303404, Whirlpool 303404, Whirlpool 313538

9. WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

For information regarding the warranty of your Supco DE138 Dryer Heater Element Assembly, please refer to the packaging or contact Supco customer support directly. Keep your proof of purchase for warranty claims. For technical assistance or further inquiries, please visit the official Supco website or contact their customer service department.

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