



The Trouble With Appliances

by Michael Poster

Twenty years ago, when we began our kitchen cabinetmaking business, there were just a few simple design rules for appliances: Provide openings of 33 inches for a refrigerator, 30 inches for a freestanding kitchen range, and 24 inches for a dishwasher.

Those days are gone. In recent years, the trend is toward sophisticated built-in appliances that have more demanding installation tolerances than the freestanding equipment of the past. As sophistication increases, so do problems. It seems like every time we open a new appliance crate, the manufacturer has thrown us a curve.

As an example, our installer once had to fit a slide-in range with a minimum height requirement of $35\frac{7}{8}$ inches into a countertop that was $35\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. To get the range trim to seat to the counter, his only recourse was to drill holes and set the “adjustable” feet into the finish floor.

Although standard appliance design calls for vertical adjustments of up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (plus or minus), some appliance manufacturers think that a scant fraction of an inch is sufficient. This thoughtless engineering can catch the unwary kitchen remodeler by surprise.

Integrating this new breed of appliances can be challenging. Cooktop openings require careful layout, since designs with extremely tight cutout clearances are becoming common. The trim often covers the cutout by only $\frac{1}{8}$

inch, leaving little room to cover inaccuracies and chipped edges. Connection locations for built-in refrigerators need to be carefully laid out during the rough-in stage so that plugs, wiring, and pipes will fit into the recesses provided by the equipment makers.

A Simple System

After recutting a couple of oven cabinets and remaking a dishwasher panel or two, we decided to implement a simple information-gathering system to ensure that the appliances would fit into their openings on installation day.

During early meetings with our customer, we confirm all appliance selections and enter their model numbers into a form (see Figure 1, next page). Our next step is to verify that the model numbers the customer gave us match those that the appliance dealer has on its order sheet. It's critical that every digit and character in the model number match; the raised panel inserts for a #WEV3458U dishwasher can be significantly different from a #WEV3458V.

When we're sure we have accurate model numbers, we order the manuals (usually four or five pages) via fax from the appliance manufacturers' customer service departments. We review the literature carefully to get the necessary cutout dimensions and clearances, plus any peculiar requirements of the appliances. We then point out

any potential trouble spots to subcontractors, offering to photocopy the sheets for them. Using the manufacturers' installation manuals prevents problems in both the design and installation phases of a kitchen.

Just the Fax, Ma'am

Recently, we've been using a fax-back system called "Instant Appliance Dimension Service" (IADS) to gather appliance information. IADS is a free service provided by Dimension Express, of Incline Village, Nev., and is available 24 hours a day.

The system uses a computer network to store and transmit manufacturers' data sheets at very high resolutions. These computer-generated faxes are far more readable than the manuals faxed from customer service departments, and often contain information not found in the standard manuals (Figure 2). Data sheets are updated by the manufacturers on a regular basis. Years ago, we installed a wall oven and discovered that the appliance trim overlapped our cabinet frame so much that the drawer front below didn't fit. The drawings from Dimension Express would have revealed this trouble spot.

To use the service, dial 702/833-3600 from the handset of a fax machine. Recorded instructions will guide you through the system. Retrieving data sheets for a specific appliance takes two calls. The first call retrieves the manufacturer's current code lists (every appliance in the IADS database has been assigned a code number), and the second call retrieves the data sheets for the selected appliances. If you use the system frequently, it may make sense to spend \$59.95 and subscribe to *Code at a Glance*, a bimonthly, up-to-date book of all appliance codes in the system. ■

Michael Poster owns and operates Michael Poster Woodworking in Montrose, Pa., and publishes *Woodweb*, a World Wide Web site for the woodworking industry.

Customer	Carl Homeowner	Date	01/24/96
Job	#242	Page	4

The following items are not supplied by Michael Poster Woodworking unless otherwise indicated

	Manufacturer	Model #	Dimension Express Code#
Sink	Kohler	K5932	
Faucet			
Sink			
Faucet			
Range			
Range			
Cooktop	Jenn-Aire	CVG2420B	351701
Cooktop			
Oven	Whirlpool	RM280PXBQ	378914
Oven			
Microwave			
Refrigerator	Sub-Zero	561	351781
Dishwasher	Whirlpool	DU900PCDB	321974
Trash compactor			
Appliance			
Appliance			

Notes:

Figure 1. The author uses this form to keep track of the customer's appliance selections and the correct model numbers.

Dimension Express 12/11/95 06:32:07 5

DIMENSION EXPRESS (702) 833-3600

1. This Data Sheet Includes Information On:

Whirlpool

Fixed Model Number(s):
 30" Electric Combination
 24" Incline and 1" Panel Covers
 71283PXC02/WH90033PXB

Dimensions/Actual Size:

Overall width: 28 1/2"
 Overall height: 46 1/4"
 Minimum cabinet width: 30"
 Minimum cabinet depth: 24"
 Rear overhang/cutout location from floor: 12"
 Distance from face of cabinet to outer edge of open doors (door swing): 23 1/2"
 Distance from face of cabinet to front of closed door handle: 4 1/2"
 Overall unit width: 29 7/8"
 Overall unit height: 46 1 1/8"
 Panel height: 23 5/8"
 Overhang top distances when using cutout dimensions listed above:
 Top overlap: 7/32"
 Bottom overlap: 7/32"
 High side overlap: 1 1/16"
 Left side overlap: 1 1/16"

2. Additional Information:

- Electric requirements: Voltage 120V ac 60Hz 40 Amps electrical ground is required. A separate circuit is required. Fuse both sides of the line. A time delay fuse or circuit is recommended. 40" flexible cable included. Use copper wire only.
- If a wall cutout is used, the cutout should be 28 5/8".
- Installation location should be away from strong draft areas such as windows, doors and strong heating vents. Oven should be located in convenient place in kitchen.
- The oven support surface must overlap with bottom of the cabinet opening.
- Cabinet opening dimensions that are shown must be used. If oven dimensions provide minimum clearance, contact surface must be solid and level.
- The necessary installation area must provide complete enclosure around the recessed portion of the oven.
- When opening is placed 12" from the floor, the bottom of microwave overhang will be 43 1/2" from the floor when open.

See page 21 for additional information

3. Diagrams:

4. Notes:

Subject to change without notice. This system is designed to be updated daily if necessary. Dimension Express is not responsible for use of, or errors in, or omissions in, or outdated data sheets. Because of the difficulty or impossibility of determining actual dimensions, ability of Dimension Express shall not be held responsible for any errors in this data sheet.

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IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT (702) 833-3600, ALWAYS REFER TO A CURRENT CODE AT A GLANCE OR MANUFACTURER'S DATA SHEET CODES OF THE DATE OF YOUR ORDER. ALWAYS REFER TO THE DATE OF YOUR ORDER.

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Figure 2. Appliance data sheets are available as high-resolution faxes from Dimension Express (702/833-3600). The computer-generated data sheets often contain information not found in the standard manuals.