

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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CPSC, Central Sprinkler Recall Omega Fire Sprinklers; Settle Lawsuit

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Central Sprinkler announced today the nationwide recall of approximately 8.4 million Omega brand fire sprinklers manufactured since 1982 by Central Sprinkler Corp. and its subsidiary, Central Sprinkler Co., of Lansdale, Pa. CPSC alleges that Omegas are defective and could likely fail in a fire. This recall announcement follows the [resolution of the lawsuit](#) filed by the Commission staff against these companies on March 3, 1998.

CPSC alleges that, on average, between 30 and 40 percent of Omegas removed from various locations across the country for testing failed to activate as they should. In some buildings, all Omegas tested failed to activate. CPSC is warning consumers that they are at risk of bodily injury or death and should have Omegas replaced as soon as possible. CPSC is urging consumers to take immediate action to determine whether the buildings where they live and work are equipped with Omegas, and if so, to call the Omega Sprinkler Recall Hotline to participate in the recall. Properly functioning fire sprinklers save lives when a fire occurs. With the Omega sprinklers, this line of defense may not be there when it is needed most.

CPSC has received reports of Omega sprinklers not functioning in 17 fires. At least four persons suffered injuries, including burns and smoke inhalation. Over \$4.3 million in property damage has been reported. The fires occurred between 1990 and the present in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas. In some cases, the sprinkler directly above the fire failed to operate.

Omega fire sprinklers are installed in homes, schools, hospitals, dormitories, nursing homes, prisons, offices, hotels and other buildings as well as federal buildings, including the Smithsonian Museums and the U.S. Capitol, which house many of the country's historical artifacts. Omegas have been or are being removed from many state and federal buildings, including the White House. As part of the settlement agreement, Central has asked Underwriters Laboratories to withdraw its listing of approval for all Omega brand fire sprinklers.

Consumers themselves should be able to determine whether their homes or other buildings are equipped with Omega fire sprinklers. On most models, consumers will be able to see three flat round metal disks stacked one above the other with a small space between each disk. Consumers should not attempt to unscrew the sprinkler or shut down their sprinkler system to determine if they have Omegas. Central will send consumers a packet of information to help them identify the sprinklers involved.

The recall of the Omega sprinklers includes models referred to or marked as follows:

- C1 (or C-1)
- C1A (or C-1A)
- C-1A PRO (or C1-A PRO)
- C1-A PRO QR
- EC-20
- EC-20A
- R-1
- R-1A
- R-1M
- Flow Control (FC, Flow Control-FC)
- Protector-M or M Protector (Upright, Pendent, Sidewall, Sidewall EC)

- HEC-12
- EC-12 RES
- HEC-12 EC
- HEC-12 EC PRO
- HEC-12 ID
- HEC-12 PRO
- HEC-12 PRO QR
- HEC-20
- Prohibitor QR and AC.

Central is offering consumers free replacement glass bulb fire sprinklers and reimbursement toward the cost of having Omega sprinklers removed and replaced. CPSC routinely requires companies to pay the full costs associated with recalls. In this case, Central's reported financial condition reveals that its ability to pay the cost of replacing the Omega sprinklers is limited. Consumers are urged to call the Omega Sprinkler Recall Hotline, available 24 hours a day, at (800) 896-5685 or to access the Omega recall website at omegarecall.com to participate in the recall. For consumers to get any monetary reimbursement for installation costs, they must submit a proof of claim and release to Central postmarked by August 1, 1999. Consumers are urged to take immediate action and call today.

Since Omegas may not operate in a fire, it is particularly important that consumers have at least one fully operational smoke detector on every floor of their home, especially near bedrooms. To ensure that the detector's batteries are working, test the detector every month. Consumers also should have a well-defined and rehearsed escape plan and an alternate escape plan in the event of a fire. "Your Home Fire Safety Checklist" is available here in [pdf format](#) or [text format](#), or you can obtain a free copy by writing to CPSC, Washington, D.C. 20207.



Consumers can also view a [video clip](#) about this recall ([Transcript](#)). It is about 10 megabytes long and the download time depends upon the speed of your Internet connection.



[Send the link for this page to a friend!](#) The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries

associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov/talk.html. To join a CPSC email subscription list, please go to www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.asp. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.