

News from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Office of Information and Public Affairs

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CPSC, Central Sprinkler Company Announce Voluntary Recall To Replace O-Ring Fire Sprinklers

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and Central Sprinkler Company, an affiliate of Tyco Fire Products LP, of Lansdale, Pa., are announcing a voluntary replacement program. The company will provide free parts and labor to replace 35 million Central fire sprinklers with O-ring seals. The program also includes a limited number of O-ring models sold by Gem Sprinkler Company and Star Sprinkler, Inc. totaling about 167,000 sprinkler heads.

Central initiated this action because it discovered the performance of these O-ring sprinklers can degrade over time. These sprinkler heads can corrode or minerals, salts and other contaminants in water can affect the rubber O-ring seals. These factors could cause the sprinkler heads not to activate in a fire. Central is providing newer fire sprinklers that do not use O-ring seals, and is voluntarily launching this program to provide enhanced protection to its sprinkler customers. This is the third largest replacement program in CPSC history.

“I am pleased that Central is voluntarily undertaking this major program proactively to replace sprinklers nationwide and protect consumers from the risk of fire,” said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown.

Central will provide free of charge replacement sprinkler heads and the labor needed to replace the sprinklers. Central will arrange for the installation by using either its own Central Field Service crews or by contracting with professional sprinkler contractors.

This replacement program includes two kinds of sprinklers, “wet” and “dry.” “Wet” sprinklers are installed in piping that is filled with water. “Dry” sprinklers are used in areas that may be exposed to very cold temperatures and the exposed piping does not contain water. Central has received 4 reports of “wet” sprinklers failing to activate during a fire and 9 similar reports on “dry” sprinklers. These incidents resulted in two property damage claims against Central.

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The sprinklers were installed nationwide in a wide variety of buildings, including houses, apartments, hospitals, day care facilities, schools, dormitories, nursing homes, supermarkets, parking garages, warehouses, and office buildings.

Central manufactured 33 million “wet” sprinklers with O-rings from 1989 until 2000 that are covered by this program. Central also manufactured 2 million “dry” sprinklers with O-rings from the mid-1970’s to June 2001 that are covered by this program. The program also covers 167,000 sprinklers with O-rings manufactured by Gem Sprinkler Co. and Star Sprinkler Inc. from 1995 to 2001. A listing of all the models covered under this voluntary replacement program is attached to the end of this release.

The fire sprinkler heads have the words “CENTRAL” or “STAR”, the letters “CSC”, the letter “G” in triangle, or a star-shaped symbol stamped on either the metal sprinkler frame or on the deflector. The model designation and date may also be stamped on the frame or deflector. The deflector is the flower, or gear-shaped metal piece at one end of the sprinkler head.



Typical “Wet” Sprinkler



Typical “Dry” Sprinkler

Laboratory testing has indicated that most of the heads would operate in a fire situation, but certain tested heads required higher water pressure to activate than may be available in particular buildings. Due to the number of sprinklers involved, this program will be phased in, with priority based on the age of the sprinklers, the population affected (e.g., buildings such as nursing homes and hospitals will be given priority), and whether the sprinklers show signs of corrosion or leakage. This program puts in place an orderly process that serves the public interest.

Building and home owners should check their fire sprinklers immediately to see if they are part of this voluntary replacement program. For more information on how to identify sprinklers subject to this program and to learn how to participate in this program, call the **Notice Packet Request Line** at **1-800-871-3492** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or access the program's web site at <http://www.SprinklerReplacement.com/>.

The Commission is currently working with the sprinkler industry to improve sprinkler reliability and upgrade existing standards and codes.

The Commission and Central emphasize that for sprinkler systems to be effective, they must be regularly inspected, and maintained like a building's heating, cooling, electrical and elevator systems. In addition, the most recent industry standards state that dry sprinkler heads should be tested, and replaced if necessary, at least every 10 years. Central believes all fire sprinkler heads should be tested no later than 10 years after installation, and depending on water quality and other factors, more frequent testing may be appropriate.

Central is also contacting foreign governments to facilitate the replacement of these O-ring sprinklers that may be installed in their countries.

Consumers should always take precautions to make sure they are fully protected from a fire, even if they have fire sprinklers in their homes. There should be at least one fully operational smoke detector on every floor of a 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. A free copy of "Your Home Fire Safety Checklist" is available from CPSC by calling (800) 638-2772, or by writing to CPSC, Washington, D.C. 20207.

VIDEO ALERT

A Video News Release showing footage regarding the sprinkler replacement program, and featuring soundbites by CPSC Chairman Ann Brown and Central Sprinkler President Bob Brinkman will be broadcast at the following times.

Satellite Coordinates (C-Band)

Thursday, July 19	Thursday, July 19	Friday, July 20
1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET	3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET	11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. ET
Telstar 4, Trans. 6	Telstar 4, Trans. 6	Telstar 4, Trans. 6
Downlink 3820 MHz (H)	Downlink 3820 MHz (H)	Downlink 3820 MHz (H)
5.8/6.2 DW, 6.8 W. Mono	5.8/6.2 DW, 6.8 W. Mono	5.8/6.2 DW, 6.8 W. Mono

For technical questions about the satellite feed, contact Barbara Kelly-Gutjahr at (212) 921-2800 Ext. 294.

This feed is sponsored by Central Sprinkler Co., and is for your free and unrestricted use.

AFFECTED MODELS

CENTRAL "WET" SPRINKLERS (Manufactured from 1989-2000)					
GB	GB4-FR	GB-R1	BB2	ELOC	ELO-GB QR
GB-J	GB4-EC	GB-RS	BB3	ESLO	LD
GB-1	GB4-QREC	GB-R	SD1	ELO SW-20	K17-231
GB-ALPHA	GB-20	ROC	SD2	ELO SW-24	Ultra K17
GB4	GB-20 QR	BB1 17/32	SD3	ESLO-20 GB	ELO-16 GB
GB-QR	GB-LO	BB2 17/32	HIP	ELO-231 GB	GB MULTI-LEVEL
GBR-2	LF	BB3 17/32	WS	ELO-GB	GB-QR MULTI-LEVEL
GB-EC	GBR	BB1	ELO-LH	ELO-231 GBQR	ELO-16 GB FR

CENTRAL "DRY" SPRINKLERS (Manufactured from Mid-1970s-2001)			
A-1	GB	GB4-EC	ELO-16 GB
H-1	GB-QR	GB4-QREC	ELO-16 GB FR
J	GB4	ELO-231 GB	
K	GB4-FR	ELO-GB QR	

GEM "WET" SPRINKLERS (Sold under Gem name from 1995-2001)	
F927	
STAR "DRY" SPRINKLERS (Manufactured from 1996-1998)	
ME-1	SG
SG-QR	Q
Q-QR	

To see a picture of the recalled product(s) and/or to establish a link from your web site to this press release on CPSC's web site, link to the following address: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml/01/01201.html>. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. 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 <http://www.cpsc.gov/talk.html>. For information on CPSC's fax-on-demand service, call the above numbers or visit the web site at <http://cpsc.gov/about/who.html>. To order a press release through fax-on-demand, call (301) 504-0051 from the handset of your fax machine and enter the release number. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.

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