

## SPRINKLER RECALLS

### 1) Central Omega

*Sources: Omega Fire Sprinkler Settlement Resource and Information and the CPSC<sup>1</sup>*

On October 14, 1998, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Central Sprinkler instituted a 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, by the Central Sprinkler Company, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission ("CPSC") and the class action plaintiffs, follows the resolution of the lawsuit<sup>2</sup> filed by the Commission staff against these companies on March 3, 1998.

*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, including the White House, which house many of the country's historical artifacts.<sup>3</sup>

**Making a Claim:** The deadline has now passed for making a claim under the Omega Sprinkler Recall/Settlement program. If you have already filed a claim prior to the November 1, 2001 deadline and would like more information about your claim, please call the Omega Recall Customer Service Department at (800) 927-5291.

**Identifying Omega Sprinklers:** "The Central Omega sprinkler can be distinguished from most other fire sprinklers because of its three discs that protrude from the bottom. However, other models may look very similar so you should verify that the model is indeed a Central Omega sprinkler."<sup>4</sup> Please see photographs on the following webpage: <http://www.firesprinkler.org/omega/identifying.html>

### 2) Central Sprinkler Replacement Program for O-Ring Seal Sprinklers

*Sources: Central Voluntary Replacement Program And the CPSC<sup>5</sup>*

On July 19, 2001, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and Central Sprinkler Company, an affiliate of Tyco Fire Products LP, of Lansdale, Pa., announced voluntary replacement program for Central fire sprinklers with O-ring seals. Central Sprinkler Company announced this replacement program since it was discovered that the performance of these O-ring sprinklers could degrade over time. The sprinkler heads can corrode, and contaminants (minerals, salts) can affect the rubber O-ring seals leading to ineffective activation in case of a fire.

This program provides free parts and labor to replace 35 million Central fire sprinklers with O-ring seals. The 33 million "wet" sprinklers with O-rings manufactured from 1989 until 2000 are covered by this program. The 2 million "dry" sprinklers with O-rings manufactured from the mid-1970's to June 2001 are

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.omegarecall.com>; <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml99/99008.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia99/media/central.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml99/99008.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.firesprinkler.org/omega/identifying.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/enterVRP.php3>;

[http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/pdfs/TycoPressRelease\\_.pdf](http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/pdfs/TycoPressRelease_.pdf)

also covered by this program. This replacement program extends to O-ring models sold by Gem Sprinkler Company and Star Sprinkler, Inc. totaling about 167,000 sprinkler heads manufactured from 1995-2001.

“Wet” sprinklers are installed in piping filled with water. “Dry” sprinklers are used in areas that may be exposed to cold temperatures, wherein the exposed piping does not contain water. 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. A listing of all the models covered under this voluntary replacement program can be found at the following CPSC press release:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerelease/prhtml01/01201.html>.<sup>6</sup>

Identifying O-ring Model Sprinkler: “To determine the manufacturer, you must visually inspect your sprinkler noting the frame and deflector. The sprinkler model may appear on the frame or deflector. For assistance please see: <http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/whatSprinklers/index.html>

Making a Claim: “You are required to provide TWO photographs of each model installed in your building, as well as a photograph of corroded or leaking sprinkler heads, if any. The two photographs should be of the sprinkler frame and the deflector surface, and should be taken from a distance of 2 feet or less.” Please see the following website to download the proper forms:

<http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/whatis/makeclaim.html>

### **3) Mealane Corporation “Star” Dry-Type Sprinkler Recall**

*Sources: Mealane Corp. Important Safety Recall: “STAR” Recall and the CPSC<sup>7</sup>*

On August 4, 1999 the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced that the Mealane Corp. of Philadelphia, Pa., formerly known as Star Sprinkler Co, is voluntarily recalling up to 1 million “Star” brand fire sprinklers manufactured from 1961 through 1976. Mealane is providing free replacement sprinkler heads and reimbursement for the labor costs of removing and replacing the old units. The Star sprinklers being recalled are dry-type models D-1, RD-1, RE-1, E-1 and ME-1 during 1961-1976. These sprinklers could fail in a fire and expose the public to injury or death. “Star” Dry-Type Sprinklers have been installed nationwide, primarily in nursing homes, hospitals, schools, resorts, stores, office buildings, warehouses and supermarkets.

CPSC reports that 67 percent of the sprinklers that were removed from locations across the country and tested at independent laboratories failed to activate properly. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, an independent, not-for-profit organization that evaluates and accredits hospitals and other long-term-care facilities, is also supporting this recall.

Identifying the “Dry” Model Sprinklers: “The name “Star” appears on the sprinkler, along with the model number and date of manufacture. With “dry-type” sprinklers, portions of the pipe do not have water in them until the sprinkler activates.”<sup>8</sup> For visual assistance, please see: <http://www.star-recall.com/diagram.htm>

Making a Claim: If you determine that you have this type of sprinkler on your property, call the Star Sprinkler Recall Hotline at (800) 866-7807 or access the website at [www.star-recall.com](http://www.star-recall.com) to participate in the recall.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/pdfs/TycoPressRelease\\_.pdf](http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com/VRP/pdfs/TycoPressRelease_.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.star-recall.com/>; <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerelease/prhtml99/99152.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerelease/prhtml99/99152.html>

#### 4) Star ME-1 Dry Sprinkler

Sources: *Star ME-1 Dry Sprinkler Recall and the CPSC*<sup>9</sup>

On April 25, 2003, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Household Inc. (AHI), formerly known as Sunbeam Corporation, of Boca Raton, Fla., announced the nationwide recall of about 60,000 Star ME-1 dry fire sprinklers, manufactured from 1977 through 1982 by Chemetron Corp., an inactive subsidiary of AHI. There have been no reports of any sprinklers specified in this recall failing while in use, but CPSC reports that samples of Star ME-1 sprinklers removed from several locations and tested by independent testing laboratories did not operate as intended.

These sprinklers were typically installed in areas of buildings where the sprinklers or water supply pipes may be subject to freezing. Examples of such areas include unheated attics, freezers and coolers, porches, and parking garages. The types of facilities in which the sprinklers were installed include nursing homes, convalescent and long-term care facilities, supermarkets and other stores, warehouses, hospitals, and office buildings.

Identifying the ME-1 Dry Sprinkler: Chemetron's Star ME-1 sprinklers have the following information molded onto the sprinkler: the name "Star," the designation "ME-1," and the year of manufacture, starting with 1977 and ending with 1982. For visual assistance, please see:

<http://www.firesprinkler.org/technical/recalls/starme1.html>

Making a Claim: Although Sunbeam Corporation filed for bankruptcy protection in February 2001, AHI has agreed to pay up to \$1 million to assist in the replacement of the Star ME-1 dry sprinklers that Chemetron manufactured from 1977 through 1982. Claims must be submitted by September 29, 2005. Specific procedures must be filed. For more information, consumers should call (888) 551-5014 toll-free anytime or visit the recall Web site at [www.starme1recall.com](http://www.starme1recall.com)

#### 5) Star ME-1 Dry Sprinkler

Source: *The CPSC (most of this information is directly quoted from the press release)*<sup>10</sup>

On April 25, 2003 the the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns consumers to replace Star ME-1 Dry Fire Sprinklers made by Sprinkler Corporation of Milwaukee. Approximately 400,000 Star ME-1 dry fire sprinklers manufactured from 1983 through 1995 by Sprinkler Corporation of Milwaukee, Inc. (SCM), formerly known as Star Sprinkler Corporation, present a safety risk and should immediately be replaced.

*This warning follows the resolution of an administrative proceeding filed by CPSC on October 9, 2001, in which CPSC alleged these sprinklers are defective and are likely to fail to operate in a fire, thereby exposing consumers to the risk of death or serious injury. CPSC reports that samples of Star ME-1 dry sprinklers removed from several locations and tested by independent testing laboratories did not operate as intended. CPSC has received reports of two failures involving Star ME-1 dry sprinklers. One report involved a 1976 sprinkler, and the other, sprinklers installed in 1990.*

These sprinklers were typically installed in areas of buildings where the sprinklers or water supply pipes may be subject to freezing. Examples of such areas include unheated attics, freezers and coolers, porches and parking garages. The types of facilities in which the sprinklers were installed include nursing homes, long-term care facilities, supermarkets, stores, warehouses, hospitals, and office buildings.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.firesprinkler.org/technical/recalls/starme1.html>; <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml03/03116.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml03/03117.html>

**Identifying the SCM's Star ME-1 Sprinklers:** The following information is molded onto the sprinkler: the name "Star," the designation "ME-1," and the year of manufacture starting with 1983 and ending with 1995. For visual assistance, please see: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml03/03117.html>

**Making a Claim:** Because SCM is no longer in operation and has no assets, it is unable to conduct a recall, and so no free replacement or refund is available for its sprinklers. Nevertheless, SCM urges building owners to follow CPSC guidance by inspecting the sprinkler systems in their buildings and replacing any Star ME-1 fire sprinklers manufactured from 1983 through 1995. For more information about testing and replacing dry type fire sprinklers, visit NFPA's Web site at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). For more information on the SCM Star ME-1 fire sprinklers, call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or visit the National Fire Sprinkler Association's Web site at [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org)