

U.S. Fire Administration / National Fire Academy

Coffee Break Training

Topic: O-Ring Sprinkler Replacement Efforts

Learning objective: The student shall be able to identify potentially flawed O-ring sprinklers subject to voluntary recall.

In July 2001, Central Sprinkler Company, an affiliate of TYCO Fire Products LP of Lansdale, PA, in cooperation with the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced a recall to replace 65 different models of Central type sprinkler heads--using O-ring type water seals--totaling approximately 35 million Central fire sprinklers.

Under certain circumstances, especially with lower water pressures, these sprinklers may fail to operate during a fire. Unfortunately, not all of these sprinklers have been replaced and there are many still putting lives and property at risk.

These O-ring model sprinklers were installed in a wide variety of buildings including homes, apartments, hospitals, day-care facilities, schools, dormitories, nursing homes, supermarkets, hotels, parking garages, warehouses, and office buildings. In addition, they may be concealed--by design--with a ceiling plate to appear more aesthetically pleasing.



Since the voluntary recall and replacement program does not continue indefinitely, fire and building inspectors can help their communities by identifying these sprinklers and encouraging or requiring sprinkler system owners to replace the potentially faulty sprinklers.

For an excellent illustration of the affected sprinklers, visit <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/oring.doc>. For additional information, please visit www.cpsc.gov and enter the search phrase "fire sprinklers" or visit <http://www.firesprinkler.org/techservices/recall.html>