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MEETING LOG DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES

SUBJECT: CPSC staff meeting with Joseph Z. Fandey

PLACE: CPSC headquarters, Room 612

MEETING DATE: November 25, 1997

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Ronald A. Jordan

RAJ

ENTRY DATE: December 3, 1997

COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

- Donald W. Switzer
- Ronald A. Jordan
- Sandy Inkster
- Larry Hershman
- Robert Franklin

NON-COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

- Joseph Z. Fandey, private citizen
- Joe Mattingly, Gas Appliance Manufacturers' Association

MEETING SUMMARY:

Joseph Z. Fandey, a private citizen, requested this meeting to learn about project activities within the CPSC. Staff provided a brief overview of the CPSC's Fire/Gas Codes and Standards project and CO Related Activities project as reflected in the agency's FY 1998 Operating Plan (excerpts attached). Staff also discussed CPSC's activities involving Flexible Connectors as reflected by the September 2, 1997 letter and press release sent to gas utilities (attached).

cc: Colin Church



PROJECT NO:	21725R	TITLE:	FIRE/GAS CODES&STD										RANK:		LEVEL:	1R		
R E S O U R C E S																		
	HIR	EPI	ECON	ENG	HS	LS	CA	ADM	EXRM	EXIS	OS	OIPA	OGC	EX	OPÉ	COM	AO	TOTAL
PROFESSIONAL STAFF MONTHS		21.0	5.0	23.0		8.0	1.0											58.00
CONTRACT DOLLARS		50.0		5.0														55.00
CONTRACTS	ORGN	AMT	PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION															
	EN	30.00	CONTRACT TO DEVELOP A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SPECIALIZED FIRE INVESTIGATIONS.															
	ES	4.00	PURCHASE AND INSTALL CLOTHES DRYERS AT THE LABORATORY FOR TESTING.															
	ES	1.00	PURCHASE AND INSTALL A FURNACE AT THE LABORATORY FOR TESTING.															
PROJECT DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION/EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS																		
PROVIDE SPECIALIZED FIRE INVESTIGATION TRAINING FOR CPSC FIELD INVESTIGATORS; AND PURSUE FIRE/GAS VOLUNTARY STANDARDS AND CODES FOR GAS WATER HEATER IGNITION OF FLAMMABLE VAPORS, CLOTHES DRYERS (TESTING AND DATA ANALYSIS), DISHWASHERS (TESTING AND DATA ANALYSIS), GAS FURNACES (TESTING AND DATA ANALYSIS), CANDLES, AND MATTRESSES IGNITED BY SMALL OPEN FLAMES.																		

ATTACHMENT

PROGRAM: HAZARD ASSESSMENT & REDUC CHEMICAL
 PROJECT WORKSHEET FY 98 OPERATING PLAN REG. X, CURR. ENH. 10/30/97

PROJECT NO:	23335R	TITLE:	CO ACTIVITIES	RANK:	LEVEL:	1R												
R E S O U R C E S																		
PROFESSIONAL STAFF MONTHS	HIR	EPI	ECON	ENG	HS	LS	CA	ADM	EXRM	EXIS	OS	OIPA	OGC	EX	OPÉ	COM	AO	TOTAL
		13.0	7.0	16.0		14.0												50.00
CONTRACT DOLLARS				17.0														17.00
CONTRACT DOLLARS		PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION																
CONTRACT DOLLARS		PURCHASE GAS LOG SETS, UNVENTED FIREBOX INSERTS, RANGES AND OVENS, AND NATURAL DRAFT FURNACES FOR TESTING.																
CONTRACT DOLLARS		PROJECT DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION/EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS																

EACH YEAR 200 PEOPLE DIE AND SEVERAL THOUSAND ARE INJURED FROM CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING RELATED TO THE USE OF HOUSEHOLD FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES. IN 1998, STAFF WILL (1) DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDERS TO CO DETECTOR ALARMS, (2) TEST CO DETECTORS MANUFACTURED UNDER UL 2034, (3) UPDATE ANNUAL CO ESTIMATES, (4) ATTEND NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION MEETINGS TO DEVELOP PRACTICES FOR INSTALLING CO WARNING EQUIPMENT (5) COMPLETE CHANGES TO THE VOLUNTARY STANDARD FOR GAS FIRED CAMPING APPLIANCES, (6) TEST UNVENTED APPLIANCES TO DETERMINE IF EMISSION LEVELS CITED IN PRODUCT STANDARDS NEED TO BE REVISED, (7) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE VOLUNTARY STANDARD TO IMPROVE THE EFFICACY OF THE VENT SAFETY SHUT OFF SYSTEM CURRENTLY REQUIRED ON NATURAL DRAFT FURNACES.



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Office of the Chairman

September 2, 1997

GAS COMPANY NAME
STREET ADDRESS
ANYTOWN, USA 12345

Dear Chief Executive or Utility Manager:

I am writing about an important safety issue that directly affects your customers. Uncoated brass connectors -- used most often with gas ranges, ovens and clothes dryers -- can corrode, leak and cause deadly explosions. I ask that you tell your customers to have a professional remove any such connectors from their homes. Your company has an important responsibility to warn its customers of this danger and to provide incentives that will encourage consumers to seek removal of these connectors.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has information indicating that since 1980 these connectors have been associated with nearly 40 deaths and 65 nonfatal injuries nationwide. There doubtless are additional deaths and injuries that have not come to our attention. Although these connectors are no longer used in new installations, large numbers remain in American homes; as they age, the likelihood that they will kill and injure increases.

Earlier this year, at our staff's urging, the American Gas Association provided its member companies a safety flyer for distribution to customers. (I have enclosed a camera-ready copy of this flyer, which the Commission staff developed with input from industry representatives.) The continuing deaths and injuries demonstrate that a renewed effort to warn consumers is needed now -- an effort in which your company ought to play an important role. The Commission is doing its part with additional publicity, including a video news release about the dangers from these connectors to be distributed in the next few days.

Attachment

I specifically request that your company distribute copies of the enclosed safety flyer to its customers. We believe the most effective distribution is by a dedicated mailing in an envelope marked "Important Safety Message From [Your Company Name] Enclosed -- Do Not Discard."

Please call me directly if you have questions about this request. Your staff designee may contact Ronald L. Medford, Assistant Executive Director, Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction, at (301) 504-0554.

I look forward to learning promptly of your company's willingness to work with the Commission in this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Brown". A solid black horizontal line is drawn above the signature.

Ann Brown
Chairman

Enclosure

!DANGER!

Certain Older Gas Connectors May Be Dangerous

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances in your home to fuel gas supply pipes. Some older brass connectors have come apart, causing fires and explosions resulting in deaths and injuries.

These older brass connectors have a serious flaw in how their tubing was joined to their end pieces. Over time, the end pieces can separate from the tubing, and cause a serious gas leak, explosion, or fire. To our knowledge, these dangerous uncoated brass connectors have not been made for more than 20 years, but many of them are still in use. The older these connectors get, the greater the possibility of failure.

Although not all uncoated connectors have this flaw, it is very difficult to tell which ones do. Therefore, **any uncoated brass connector should be replaced immediately** with either a new plastic-coated brass or a new stainless steel connector. Connectors can wear out from too much moving, bending, or corrosion. Connectors should always be replaced whenever the appliance is replaced or moved from its location.



WARNING: Only a qualified professional should check your connector and replace it if needed. Don't try to do this yourself!

Moving the appliance, even slightly, whether to clean behind it or to inspect its gas connector, can cause the complete failure of one of these older weakened connectors, possibly resulting in a deadly fire or explosion.

Do not move your appliance to check the connector!

IF YOU SMELL GAS

If you suspect a gas leak:

- **Leave the house immediately.**
- Don't use your phone; call your gas supplier or the telephone operator for assistance from a neighbor's house.
- Don't light a match.
- Don't turn on a light.
- Don't switch on anything electrical.

