

Defective Furnaces in California

"The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is warning consumers in California that certain gas-fired horizontal forced-air furnaces manufactured by Consolidated Industries (formerly Premier Furnace Company) present a substantial risk of fire. There have been about thirty (30) reports of fires and damage to homes associated with these furnaces, as well as failures of burners and heat exchangers that can lead to fires. The furnaces were installed exclusively in California.

Consolidated manufactured approximately 190,000 of these furnaces from 1983 through 1994 under many different brand names. Most of the furnaces were manufactured under the Premier/Consolidated labels. All of the furnaces can be identified by the fact that they are equipped with steel control rods installed above the burners. These steel rods were required to satisfy California air quality regulations for nitrous oxide emissions.

Many of these furnaces are still in use. Normally, the furnaces are installed in attics, although some may be installed in crawl spaces. The Commission is warning consumers to have their gas-fired furnaces inspected by a licensed heating contractor to determine whether the furnaces are subject to this safety alert. The contractor also should determine whether the burners and/or heat exchangers of units are damaged, or whether wood under or near the furnaces shows signs of damage, such as charring or blackening. If this is the case, the furnaces should be replaced immediately or repaired.

Because Consolidated is currently in bankruptcy liquidation, the availability of repair parts is, at this time, unresolved. However, there is ongoing private litigation which could enable consumers to recover at least some of their out-of-pocket expenses for replacement or repair of the furnaces.

Suggestions for improving the fire safety of all horizontal forced-air furnaces in attics are:

- ✓ Protect the wood deck or rafters on which the furnace is mounted by covering it with a non-combustible material, such as cement board, that extends a minimum of 12 inches past the side of the furnace.
- ✓ Provide an air space beneath the furnace. A licensed contractor can perform this work and can offer the homeowner several ways to accomplish this.
- ✓ Make sure the furnace is installed correctly and serviced at least annually. The inspection should include a safety inspection of the burner assembly and heat exchanger.
- ✓ Install an ionization-type smoke detector inside the attic to provide an early warning of smoke or fire."

The CPSC has issued the above warning regarding defective furnaces in the State of California. As a result of this warning, Watkins Realty Group urges all clients to have a licensed heating contractor inspect the furnace in the home that they are selling or purchasing to determine if the furnace falls into the category described in the above warning.

We hereby acknowledge receipt of this form. We have read and understood the above warning and the recommendation by Watkins Realty Group that we have a licensed heating contractor inspect the furnace of the home we are currently selling or purchasing. We hold Watkins Realty Group, its agents and employees, harmless of any and all liability regarding the safety of the furnace located at:

Address:

Escrow #:

Seller (s):

Buyer (s)

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____