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June 2003

CNA

STAR ME-1 DRY FIRE SPRINKLER RECALL ANNOUNCED BY THE CPSC AND AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD INC. (FORMERLY SUNBEAM CORP.)

About 60,000 Star ME-1 dry fire sprinklers manufactured by Chemetron, an inactive subsidiary of American Household, Inc. (formerly Sunbeam Corp.) are being recalled. These sprinklers were manufactured between 1977 and 1982. This recall announcement follows the resolution of an administrative proceeding filed by CPSC on October 9, 2001, in which the 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 sprinklers removed from several locations and tested by independent testing laboratories did not operate as intended. Although there have been no reports that Star ME-1 dry sprinklers manufactured by Chemetron Corporation have failed to operate while in use, CPSC has received reports of two failures involving Star ME-1 dry sprinklers manufactured by other companies. One report involved a 1976 sprinkler, and the other involved sprinklers installed in 1990.

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. 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.

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.

To receive payment for sprinkler replacement, consumers must follow specific procedures and must submit claims by September 29, 2005. For more information, consumers should call ***888-551-5014*** or visit the recall Web site at ***www.starme1recall.com***.

CPSC previously announced that Mealane Corporation voluntarily agreed to recall Star ME-1 sprinklers manufactured from 1961 through 1976 and Central Sprinkler Company voluntarily agreed to replace Star ME-1 fire sprinklers manufactured from 1996 through 1998. The Sprinkler Corporation of Milwaukee, which manufactured Star ME-1 sprinklers from 1983 through 1995, has no assets with which to fund a recall, but is issuing a safety notice warning building owners to replace these sprinklers. Consumers can obtain information about those recalls and safety notices on CPSC's web site and see pictures of the recalled product at ***http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml03/03116.html***.

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