

Alabama Department of Public Health, Technical Services Unit

Sprinkler Head Recall

05/08/02

The massive sprinkler head recall announced last year by the Consumer Product Safety Commission affects many of Alabama's health care facilities.

In March 2002, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter to all state survey agencies regarding an imposed deadline for the replacement. Providers have until the end of December 2002 to identify and replace recalled sprinkler heads. Beginning January 2003, providers that have not replaced, or made good progress in replacing, recalled sprinkler heads will be cited on Life Safety Code surveys under tag K-62 for failure to maintain their sprinkler system. "Good progress" would be documentation from Central, Star, or Gem sprinkler companies that the company has been notified that the facility has the recalled heads, and that a letter of commitment to place the facility on the list to be fitted with new sprinkler heads has been issued by Central, Star, or Gem and received by the facility. Facilities that do not have the recalled heads in their building should have confirmation from their sprinkler contractors to that effect.

This replacement program involves several types of sprinkler heads used in wet and dry pipe systems, affecting an estimated 35 million heads. The types of sprinkler heads in this recall have been used extensively in health care facilities throughout Alabama. Central Sprinkler Company has indicated that hospitals and nursing homes will be given priority over other types of buildings, and that the replacement will be at no cost to building owners. Each facility should contact the sprinkler contractor which performs its routine maintenance, for assistance in identification of these sprinkler heads in the building. Alabama law requires that sprinkler system maintenance, alterations, and changing of heads be performed only by contractors that have a permit from the State Fire Marshal. For complete information and claim packet materials, check the Internet at <http://www.SprinklerReplacement.com> or call 1-866-505-8553.