



Customer Focus on Loss Control

Innovative Safety and Health SolutionsSM

Omega Series Sprinkler Heads

Statistics from the National Fire Protection Association indicate that automatic sprinklers are approximately 97 percent effective when they are installed, maintained, and tested as required. Recently, however, a certain make and model(s) of sprinklers has been identified as having the potential for impaired operation (specifically, non-activation at normal system pressure).

For almost two years, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) has conducted operational tests to determine the reliability of Omega Series sprinklers (manufactured by Central Sprinkler Company) and to determine the exact cause of the problem. Operational tests of more than 2,900 sprinklers from approximately 200 different locations indicate that the operating pressures for some samples have required pressures greater than 5 psi to operate, as required by UL. This condition could prevent the discharge of water in the event of a fire.

UL's investigation includes exploration of two field conditions that might prevent Omega sprinklers from operating by adversely impacting the EPDM O-ring. These conditions are:

1. The use of a "stop leak" product in the sprinkler system.
2. The presence of hydrocarbon oils (such as pipe thread cutting oil) in the water around the sprinkler head seal.

However, UL's investigation of this matter and other potential causes continues.

The Omega sprinklers in question are the AC, C-1, C-1A, EC-20, EC-20A, Flow Control-FC, HEC-12, HEC-12E, HEC-1-12 RES, HEC-20, HEC-12PRO, HEC-12EC PRO, C-1A PRO, and Omega Protector-M series. Many of these sprinkler heads are listed only for light hazard or residential occupancies and will, therefore, be found in hotels, dormitories, and healthcare facilities.

Due to the potential problem of non-activation of certain Omega sprinklers at normal system pressure, The Hartford recommends that a representative sample of the Omega sprinklers listed above be submitted to an independent testing facility (such as Underwriters Laboratories) for testing. (UL has waived its usual fee for sprinkler sample testing of the Omega sprinklers listed above.)

For more details on selecting and packaging sprinklers for testing, contact The Hartford Loss Control Department, a reputable sprinkler contractor, or consult NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*. At UL, contact Mr. Kerry Bell, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., 333 Pfingsten Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062.

