

# CAMPUS SAFETY



# QUARTERLY

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## Faulty Furnaces Pose Hazard in California

On September 27, 2000, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a warning that some gas-fired forced air furnaces sold in California between 1983 and 1994 pose a substantial risk of causing fires. The furnaces were manufactured by Consolidated Industries (formerly Premier Furnace Company) and sold under more than 30 different brand names including Kenmore and Trane. They have been linked to at least 50 fires in California, including one in San Diego. No injuries or deaths have been caused by these defective furnaces to date. More than 190,000 of the furnaces were sold in California either for new home construction or as replacement units during the time covered by the warning. The furnaces are susceptible to starting fires due to design modifications made to comply with California air quality standards. The modifications have been shown to raise internal temperatures causing the burners to warp and allowing flames to escape from the unit. The warped furnaces can also leak carbon monoxide gas. One family in San Diego narrowly escaped carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty Consolidated furnace. The furnaces affected by this warning all use a horizontal burner and are usually installed in an attic or crawlspace.

An engineer contracted by the CPSC to test hundreds of Consolidated furnaces stated that "these furnaces are guaranteed to fail," typically after eight to ten years of steady use. Most of the affected furnaces have reached or exceeded this critical age.

Because Consolidated Industries has declared bankruptcy, there is no product recall or replacement available to homeowners. The cost for a licensed contractor to inspect and replace the units is estimated at about \$2,000. San Diego Gas and Electric has identified and turned off more than 800 furnaces since the warning was issued in September. Consumers are advised to have their furnaces thoroughly inspected by licensed heating and air conditioning contractors.

(Continued on Page 2)

**EH&S  
Wishes  
You a  
Safe  
and  
Happy  
New  
Year!**



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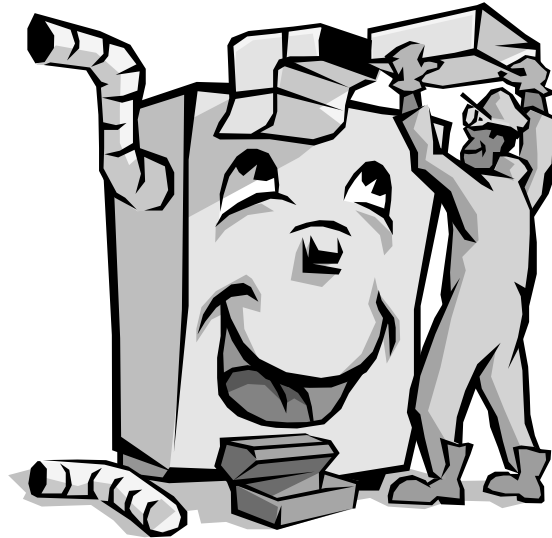
## What Consumers Should Do:

- Check your furnace brand name against the list at the end of this article. Most are installed in attics or crawlspaces.
- If your furnace brand appears on the list and was installed from 1983 to 1994, call a licensed heating and air conditioning contractor to inspect your furnace. Consolidated has stated these furnaces are not repairable and will need to be replaced. Contact the Contractor's State License Board at 800-321-2752 to check the status of any contractor's license before signing any contract.
- Install an ionization-type smoke detector in the attic or crawlspace to provide an early warning of smoke or fire.
- Check your homeowner's insurance policy to see if replacement cost may be covered.
- Contact your homebuilder if your home was constructed with one of these units during the specified time frame.
- Experts recommend a thorough annual inspection of every gas-fired furnace, even if it's not on the list. Have your furnace inspected.

### Brand Names in Warning (others may be added):

<b>ACP</b>	<b>Heatmaster</b>
<b>Airco</b>	<b>Janitrol</b>
<b>Arcoaire</b>	<b>Johnstone</b>
<b>Addison</b>	<b>Keeprite</b>
<b>Amana</b>	<b>Kenmore</b>
<b>American Best</b>	<b>Liberty</b>
<b>American Standard</b>	<b>Magic Chef</b>
<b>Bard</b>	<b>Northrup</b>
<b>Century</b>	<b>Olsen</b>
<b>Comfort Aire</b>	<b>P.F.C.</b>
<b>Coleman</b>	<b>Premier</b>
<b>Consolidated</b>	<b>Sears</b>
<b>Duomatic-Olsen</b>	<b>Sunbelt</b>
<b>Franklin Electric</b>	<b>Sunburst</b>
<b>GMC</b>	<b>Sundial</b>
<b>Goettl</b>	<b>Sun Glow</b>
<b>Goodman</b>	<b>Trane</b>
<b>Hamilton Electric</b>	<b>Weatherking</b>
<b>Heat Controller</b>	

For additional information regarding this consumer safety warning, please call Environmental Health and Safety at 46778.



## Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

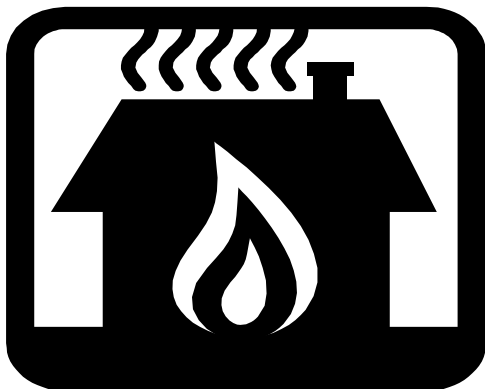
Each winter, the news carries stories of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a gas created when household fuels do not burn completely. Most often this is due to malfunctioning heaters, blocked chimneys or cooking appliances used inappropriately for heating. Because it is tasteless and odorless, you may not be aware of the presence of carbon monoxide, making it even more dangerous. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to flu symptoms and include dizziness, headache, drowsiness and upset stomach. Every year, the news reports cases of carbon monoxide poisoning which result in death.

With the arrival of the winter heating season, houses are sealed up tighter and building heat is turned on. San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) recommends these precautions to protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning this winter:

1. Have a licensed contractor check your stove, water heater, furnace, wall heater, and gas fireplace to make sure they are in good working condition. Make recommended repairs before using these appliances.

2. Keep your fireplace clean and drafting properly. The damper should be fully open any time the fireplace is in use, even with a gas log. Do not assume it is open. Check the flue during the day when you can see daylight by looking up the chimney. Mark the open position for future reference. Do not close the flue until the fire is completely extinguished.
3. Do not use cooking appliances such as your oven for heating. They are not designed for this purpose and do not have proper venting. This can cause a dangerous accumulation of carbon monoxide.
4. Check all pilot lights and burner flames on gas appliances. Flames should be blue with tiny flecks of orange. A yellow flame may indicate the presence of carbon monoxide.
5. Clean the furnace and install new filters regularly to ensure efficient operation.
6. Install a carbon monoxide detector near each sleeping area.

If your carbon monoxide detector sounds and you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, call **9-1-1** for medical assistance and get out of the house until help arrives. If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide, but no one is experiencing symptoms, shut off gas appliances, ventilate the house and call San Diego Gas and Electric at 1-800-411-7343. You may also consult the SDG&E web site at: [www.sdge.com](http://www.sdge.com) for more information about carbon monoxide.



## Ten Habits You Can Improve to Reduce Accidents

The National Safety Council has identified ten habits that are the direct cause of accidents. Read the following list to identify habits that you can improve to reduce your risk of injury. Let's all resolve to have a safe New Year at SDSU!

- **Negligence:** Failure to observe safety rules or instructions or to maintain equipment safely.
- **Anger:** Results in irrational behavior and loss of common sense.
- **Hasty Decisions:** Acting quickly can result in hazardous shortcuts.
- **Indifference:** Lack of attention to the task at hand.
- **Distraction:** Interruption by others while performing either normal job duties or non-routine tasks.
- **Curiosity:** Trying something unexpected to see what happens.
- **Inadequate Instruction:** Results in improperly trained workers.
- **Poor Work Habits:** Cluttered work area, loose clothing, and poor housekeeping create unnecessary hazards.
- **Overconfidence:** Behavior that is too cocky, risk-taking or macho.
- **Lack of planning or communication:** Two or more people depending on the other to do something and it doesn't get done.

**Remember that it takes everyone working together to make our campus safe.**

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## Universal Wastes: A New Definition

Hazardous waste has a new definition that will affect almost all SDSU employees and departments. In March 2000, the California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal/EPA DTSC) adopted regulations that designate several commonly used materials as **Universal Wastes** when they are disposed.

### The following materials have been designated as Universal Wastes:

- Thermostats that use mercury switches to make electrical contact. Thermostats that do not contain mercury are not Universal Wastes.
- Virtually all batteries including: rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries, silver button batteries, mercury batteries, small sealed lead acid batteries such as those used in burglar alarms and emergency lights, alkaline batteries, carbon-zinc batteries, and any other battery that exhibits any hazardous waste characteristics such as corrosivity or toxicity. Automotive type lead acid batteries will continue to be regulated as hazardous waste, not Universal Waste.
- Lamps, including most fluorescent tubes, high intensity discharge (HID) lamps, and high pressure sodium lamps.

### Handling Practices:

All universal wastes must be labeled with the date they are generated or become ready for discard after being "used up." They must also be identified with the type of waste. For example:

#### Alkaline Batteries – March 3, 2000.

Private residences (households) are exempt from universal waste regulations. However, household does not mean hotel, motel, residence hall, campground, or day-use recreation facility.

Universal wastes may be stored at the point of generation for no more than six months and must be properly contained and labeled.

### Training:

Employees must be trained in **Universal Waste Management** including how to package, store and label the waste. Additionally, employees must be trained in how to respond to spills or releases of waste. Documentation of all training must be maintained.

### Labeling:

Each thermostat, battery or lamp, or each container of universal waste must be labeled with the accumulation start date as follows:

Thermostats: Universal Waste – mercury thermostat(s), or waste mercury thermostat(s), or used mercury thermostat(s) and date.

Batteries: Universal Waste – battery(ies) or waste battery(ies) or used battery(ies) and date.

Lamps: Universal Waste – lamp(s), or waste lamp(s), or used lamp(s) and date.

### Packaging/Storage:

Universal waste must be packaged and stored in a manner that will prevent a release. Damaged or leaking universal wastes (including broken lamps, broken thermostat ampules or leaking batteries) must be segregated and stored in closed containers that are compatible with the waste and that prevent any release or leakage.

Ampules of mercury (mercury switches) removed from thermostats and in good condition must be stored in closed, leakproof containers. The switches must be packaged with materials/absorbents adequate to prevent breakage.

Broken switches and leaking batteries (battery electrolytes) must be managed as hazardous waste. Call Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) at 46778 to request removal or if you have questions.

EH&S will regulate, monitor, store and dispose of universal waste and hazardous waste. For questions or to request clarification regarding the universal waste designation, please contact EH&S at 46778.