



# DPI Investigator

May 2010

## What's The Goal?



The goal of failure analysis is to produce an unbiased, objective report of the facts as known.

DPI strives to be as objective as possible, give appropriate helpful information (such as a manufacturer's address, when applicable), and offer a beneficial product. Many times it seems like walking a tightrope between too much and too little, all while trying to come to a clear conclusion with all the "t"s crossed and the "i"s dotted.

DPI's number one goal is to communicate with, and meet the needs of, all our customers. We have learned that there are varying needs and perceptions. We have also learned that companies operate their subrogation departments in different ways.

Some adjusters expect a purely objective analysis with no additional suggestions for possible scenarios. They "interpret" the information and decide what to do. Other adjusters want "everything, plus the kitchen sink" thrown in an inspection report. DPI's perspective is that factual information is appropriate for the report, but the inspector's "gut feeling" about what they "think" happened is not.

"Gut feelings," opinions, or suggestions may have their place in a follow-up phone call. For instance, "Mr. Adjuster, did you notice the report states that the evidence widget had been in service for 75 years? My opinion is that it was at the end of a reasonable service life. Are you sure you want to pursue subrogation?"

Please continue to give us input. Together we can reach the goal of objectivity and quality.

*"All we want are the facts, ma'am."*

Dragnet's Sgt. Joe Friday

When a DPI inspector opens up a file folder and looks at the evidence, he seldom has all the facts. Sometimes, the mode of failure is very obvious. For instance, many fractures are due to some form of material fatigue over time. But the facts behind the fracture may not be readily discernible. What forces influenced the stress fluctuations? Was temperature a factor? Was the item installed in some excessively strained way? Had that broken section of CPVC pipe done double duty as a clothes hanger in the basement laundry room? Help us help you by providing all the relevant facts you gather when processing a claim.

## Make It Legal



The basic types of defects for product liability claims are:

- **Manufacturing Defect**
- **Design Defect**
- **Insufficient Instructions or Warnings**

When one of these defect types can clearly be identified, DPI will point it out in the report conclusion. Sometimes, this is justified based on DPI's experience with a particular product. Other cases require an expert statement from the resident engineer. Level II and Level III reports are reviewed and/or written by the engineer.

## Evidence Submission 101

### TIPS FROM CUSTOMER SERVICE

- When sending evidence, don't forget to include a claim form.
- Fire and electrical inspections must be Level II or Level III. Please indicate which one on the claim form.
- When referring subrogation to a third-party service, please notify DPI Customer Service Department by phone or email with the authorization.

**Thanks!** To all the adjusters who have been paying attention to our tips in the monthly issues of the DPI Investigator.

Lately, DPI inspectors have reported receiving on-site photos more frequently along with the claim history. This is often a key factor in providing an accurate and beneficial report.



### On-site Photo Tips:

- Best photos are prior to disassembly and repair
- Wide view showing item and damaged area
- Medium views showing complete item in place
- Close-ups of evidence item in leak or fire area

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 March 16, 2010  
 Release #10-167

Remote Control Kits for Electric Fireplaces and Stoves Recalled by Dimplex North America Due to Fire and Burn Hazards

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. **Name of Product:** Remote Control Kits for Electric Fireplaces and Stoves **Units:** About 700,000 **Importer:** Dimplex North America, of Ontario, Canada **Hazard:** The plug-in wall unit can overheat, posing a fire and burn hazard to consumers. **Incidents/Injuries:** Dimplex has received about 5,000 reports of the plug-in wall units overheating including 19 reports of damage beyond the remote control and one report of a house fire in Columbus, Ohio that resulted in considerable property damage. **Description:** The recalled remote control kits are used with Dimplex, Electraflame, Symphony, Optiflame, Electralog and Charmglow brand electric fireplaces, stoves and fireplace inserts. They include a black or dark gray hand-held remote control and also a black or dark gray wall unit that plugs into an electrical wall outlet. Recalled model numbers include 47-1001, 47-1010-R and APT-1315. The model number is printed on either the plug-in unit or the hand-held remote control. The fireplace or stove's brand name is printed on both units. **Sold at:** Mass merchandise, home improvement, specialty fireplace and furniture retailers from January 1998 through December 2008 for between \$200 and \$1,500 for the fireplaces and stoves. This recall includes remote control kits subsequently replaced under warranty. **Manufactured in:** China **Remedy:** Consumers should immediately stop using the remote control kits, unplug the power cord from the remote control kit's wall unit, remove the wall unit from the electrical outlet and contact Dimplex for a free replacement kit. Consumers can continue to operate the fireplace or stove by plugging the fireplace or stove's electrical cord directly into an electrical outlet. **Consumer Contact:** For additional information, contact Dimplex North America toll-free at (866) 673-9880 anytime, or visit the firm's Web site at [www.recall.dimplex.com](http://www.recall.dimplex.com)



Label on Model APT-1315



Label on Model 47-1010R



DPI inspects numerous timer and remote control devices.



47-1001