

## LOG OF MEETING

**SUBJECT:** Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) Fire Council

**DATE OF MEETING:** May 5-6, 1998

**DATE OF LOG ENTRY:** May 12, 1998

**PERSON SUBMITTING LOG:** James F. Hoebel

**LOCATION:** Oak Brook Hills Hotel, Oak Brook, Illinois

**CPSC ATTENDEES:** James F. Hoebel, Engineering Sciences  
Eric Ault, Central Regional Center

### NON-CPSC ATTENDEES:

Fire Council Members:

Ralph Transue, Pete Tyree, Jim Sealy, Alfred Hogan, Joseph Fleming, Mark Jachniewicz, Arthur Smith, Patrick Phillips, John Verscay, Howard Hopper, Robert Cormier, Klaus Wahle, Walter Smittle, III, Pat Brock, Myron Sasser, Ken Richardson, Larry Litchfield, Margaret Mahoney, Robert Solomon, David Stroup, Eugene Marotta, Tony Crimi, Rick Dumala, Rick McCullough, Tony Chow, John Degenkolb, Pat McCullen, Tony Gumkowski, Bill Thomas, Chet Schirmer, John Davenport, Bob Zalosh, Rexford Wilson, Harold Nelson, Dick Comstock, Jim Martin, Patrick Coughlin, Art Black, Jim Roberts, Jim Milke, Rick Mulhaupt, Ken Schoonover

UL Staff

**SUMMARY OF MEETING:** The Fire Council meeting was called to order by James Beyreis, Vice President, UL. Mr. Beyreis announced that the meeting was an open meeting, open to the public.

The agenda is attached. Almost all agenda items were suggested by individual Council members. The order of presentations was somewhat adjusted from the order in the agenda. In each case, a short presentation was made by the appropriate UL staff member, to address the interest of the Fire Council. This log will address only selected agenda items: UL will publish a complete report later.

The topic of Central Sprinkler Company was presented by Kerry Bell. He provided background on the Omega sprinkler head issue, discussing safety concerns, models, field sample testing, actions, retrofit kit, and a summary. Tests have indicated that the operating pressure in some heads has exceeded the available system pressure. UL attributes this behavior to heads containing an "EPDM" O-ring component. Central has replaced the EPDM O-ring with a silicone component. Actions include a July 1996 UL bulletin requesting input, several UL News Releases, field sample testing, a revision to the UL 199 Standard with a new exposure test, Central working with owners and contractors, and the

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CPSC's Administrative Complaint seeking a product recall. Mr. Bell noted that the Central retrofit kit, a spring device, is currently not being made available by Central, since the Authorities Having Jurisdiction have not been accepting this "fix." There was active questioning of Mr. Bell.

Paul Patty discussed smoke alarms. Several Fire Council members questioned the appropriateness of the current UL Standard's smoldering fire test. Mr. Beyreis stated that UL will take a serious look at this test, as an action item. Mr. Hoebel, during this discussion, informed the Council that CPSC was considering the possibility of a research project in 2000 to evaluate the relative performance of different types of alarms when subjected to real fires of different types. UL and others expressed support for this concept. During a discussion of the relative merits of ionization and photoelectric alarms, Mr. Fleming noted how difficult it is to comply with any requirement to install photoelectric alarms: they are difficult to obtain. The idea of a separate UL listing for detectors for installation in locations susceptible to nuisance alarms was raised. Mr. Roberts expressed support for this idea, stating that market forces would then insure availability. He noted that North Carolina now requires photoelectric detectors in sleeping occupancies.

A standard for multi-sensor fire/smoke detectors is being developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). UL is a corresponding member of this activity. UL would consider incorporating the output from this activity into their UL 268 standard, but there is little available yet. UL has listed some combination ion/photo/heat devices.

Mr. Patty also discussed the status of carbon monoxide alarms. UL has just finished incorporating additional revisions into their standard. One Fire Council question concerned the CO sensor life. UL responded that this was a function of the type of sensor, and could range from about three years for one type to 7-10 years for another.

UL presented a videotape of their Fire Department operation.

The subject of fire extinguishers was covered by Bill Kerry of UL. CPSC had raised the question of UL's policy of using experts to conduct extinguisher approval testing, and whether expert testers were appropriate to evaluate the performance of extinguishers when used by consumers. UL uses experienced laboratory testers for reasons of consistency of results. However, they build into their test protocol a margin to cover the differences in tester ability between experts and novices.

CPSC also suggested the possibility of applying a cooking oil extinguisher test. UL did develop such a test and classification, "Class K," for commercial cooking equipment. They would be willing to develop a classification for a special purpose home product for use in residential kitchens.

Mr. Kerry also addressed fire blankets. In the past, UL has had occasional submittals for testing. However, they now decline to investigate these products, because they believe that testing of them creates safety concerns to the tester in the laboratory. UL asked that Fire Council members provide separate comments to them as to whether UL should investigate fire blankets.

Mr. Litchfield showed a videotape of the new Phoenix sports complex, featuring the safety systems.

George Fechtmann of UL described the status of their plastic appliance enclosure efforts. An ad hoc committee has been formed to work with UL, and they are applying a hazard based safety approach. They hope to develop proposals to their UL 746C standard by October 14, when an Industry Advisory Conference is scheduled. A Fire Council member wondered about a correlation between the UL 94 tests used for these products versus more fundamental fire tests such as the cone calorimeter. Dr. P. Gandhi (of UL) responded that there was not a good correlation, as they are different kinds of tests.

UL's Don Grob described the CPSC project on rangetop fires. The question raised was whether UL would respond to the CPSC research by proposing appropriate modifications to the UL standard on electric ranges. Mr. Grob replied, "Yes, when the project is finished." At that time, they would appoint an ad hoc committee, including representatives of the sensor and range industries, to consider this issue.

The UL activities concerning halogen torchiere lamps was presented by Tom Wholen. Further revisions to the UL Standard will be adopted the next week, including a reaffirmation of the maximum 300 watt requirement, different draping test based on CPSC and UL work, a specific guard requirement, a more rigorous tipover test, and product marking. Dr. Zalosh asked about the hazard of the halogen lamp (bulb) fracturing. Mr. Wholen described the quartz guard around the bulb. UL would like to test and list bulbs, but no manufacturer has submitted any for listing.

Mark Leimbeck covered the countertop cooking appliance subject for UL. He described issues relating to coffee makers, toaster ovens/broilers, automatic toasters, and deep fat fryers.

The Fire Council meeting coincided with the UL Annual Meeting. UL announced a major corporate reorganization at this time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>FIRE SUPPRESSION AND EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	CENTRAL SPRINKLER COMPANY - MODEL OMEGA SPRINKLER .....	1
1.2	UL VS FMRC LISTING TESTS FOR NEW TYPES OF SPRINKLER HEADS .....	3
1.3	SPRINKLER FOR WAREHOUSE FIRE PROTECTION .....	4
1.4	STATUS OF REVIEW FOR NEW UL 300 REQUIREMENTS .....	4
1.5	SPRINKLER HEAD AND THERMAL DETECTOR RTI INFORMATION .....	5
1.6	LISTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-METALLIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM PIPE .....	6
1.7	WATER METERS USED ON SPRINKLER SYSTEMS .....	6
1.8	NFPA 750 VS UL REQUIREMENTS FOR WATER MIST FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS .....	7
1.9	CERTIFICATION OF INSTALLERS OF UL LISTED SPECIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS .....	8
1.10	QUANTITY OF AGENT IN A PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHER .....	8
1.11	COOKING OIL VS HEPTANE FOR PORTABLE RESIDENTIAL FIRE EXTINGUISHER EVALUATION .....	9
1.12	UL TESTING OF FIRE BLANKETS .....	9
<b>2.0</b>	<b>DETECTOR ISSUES</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1	SMOKE DETECTOR PERFORMANCE TESTS .....	10
2.2	STATUS OF A UL STANDARD FOR MULTI-SENSOR FIRE/SMOKE DETECTORS .....	11
2.3	CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS .....	11
<b>3.0</b>	<b>FIRE RESISTANCE OF PRODUCTS AND ASSEMBLIES</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1	FOAM PLASTIC ROOF INSULATION - UL 1256 .....	12
3.2	FIRE RESISTANCE TEST FURNACE DESCRIPTION .....	12
3.3	IDENTIFICATION OF FIRE DOORS TESTED UNDER POSITIVE PRESSURE .....	13
3.4	FLAMMABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PLASTIC ENCLOSURES OF ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS .....	13
<b>4.0</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF MATERIALS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
4.1	PERFORMANCE BASED DATA .....	14
4.2	NON-COMBUSTIBILITY .....	15
<b>5.0</b>	<b>RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>16</b>
5.1	UL SMOKE CONTROL RESEARCH .....	16
5.2	SMOKE AND HEAT VENTING OF WAREHOUSING .....	17
5.3	UL LISTING AND STANDARD DEVELOPMENT FOR INTERMEDIATE BULK CONTAINERS .....	17
<b>6.0</b>	<b>EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT</b> .....	<b>18</b>
6.1	EXIT SIGN REQUIREMENTS .....	18
6.2	SECURITY BAR RELEASING DEVICES .....	19

<b>7.0</b>	<b>ALARM SYSTEMS</b> .....	<b>20</b>
7.1	YEAR 2000 IMPACT ON FIRE ALARM AND RELATED EQUIPMENT SOFTWARE .....	20
7.2	STANDARD FOR SECURITY LOCKING DEVICES INTERFACED WITH BUILDING ALARM AND DETECTION SYSTEMS .....	21
7.3	REQUIREMENTS TO REDUCE RANGETOP COOKING FIRES .....	21
<b>8.0</b>	<b>FLAMMABLE FLUIDS AND GASES</b> .....	<b>22</b>
8.1	UL 2244 ABOVEGROUND TANK SYSTEMS .....	22
8.2	FUEL OIL TANKS .....	22
8.3	UL 2208 SOLVENT DISTILLATION UNITS .....	23
<b>9.0</b>	<b>UL DIRECTORIES AND STANDARDS</b> .....	<b>24</b>
9.1	STANDARDS CONSOLIDATION .....	24
9.2	HARMONIZATION OF CAN/ULC S102 AND UL 723 FLAME SPREAD CLASSIFICATION .....	25
9.3	IBCO ADOPTION OF UL 10C .....	25
9.4	ELECTRONIC VERSION OF UL LISTED DIRECTORIES .....	26
<b>10</b>	<b>ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES</b> .....	<b>27</b>
10.1	STATUS OF UL REQUIREMENTS FOR TORCHIERE LAMPS .....	27
10.2	POSSIBLE REVISION OF UL 858 DEALING WITH COUNTERTOP COOKING APPLIANCES .....	28
<b>11.0</b>	<b>GENERAL</b> .....	<b>29</b>
11.1	EXTERIOR INSULATED FINISH SYSTEM (EIFS) WALL CONSTRUCTION .....	29
11.2	UL 2200 ENGINE GENERATOR SETS .....	30
11.3	CONFIDENTIALITY OF UL REPORTS ON NEW PRODUCTS .....	30
11.4	PLENARY TOPIC - SAFETY AND CONFORMITY ISSUES .....	31