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MEETING LOG  
DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES

SUBJECT: Discussion of Possible Technological Solution to the Water Heater Flammable Vapor Ignition Issue

PLACE: CPSC Headquarters, 4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD

MEETING DATE: May 9, 1995

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Donald W. Switzer *DW*

ENTRY DATE: May 9, 1995

COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

Donald W. Switzer	ES
Ron Jordan	ES
Bill Rowe	HA
Bob Franklin	EC

NON-COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

Robert Gants	Redmon, Boykins&Braswell
Charles S. Crawford, III	Firexx
Nick Wakeman	Product Safety Letter
Leeuwenburgh	Product Safety Letter

MEETING SUMMARY

Mr. Gants requested this meeting to discuss the application of the Firexx fire suppression technology to water heater ignition of flammable vapors. The Firexx product is a coarse metal mesh that prevents ignition of vapors. There are two main operating principles, energy dissipation and formation of a "dead space" separating the ignition source from the vapor. This technology has been used in aircraft fuel tanks and petroleum storage tanks to prevent fuel ignition.

As explained by Mr. Crawford, the mesh material would be installed in the combustion chamber of the water heater to prevent vapors from either entering the appliance, or, if ignited, from flashing back out of the appliance and igniting the vapors in the room. Limited testing at Battelle Memorial Institute indicates this product holds potential to address the problem. Firexx is approaching the water heater manufacturers to encourage them to examine their product.

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