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FEB 25 1974

Honorable John E. Moss
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Commerce and Finance
Committee on Interstate and
Foreign Commerce
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Further reference is made to your letter of January 23, 1974, in which you forwarded an inquiry from Mr. Albert Rein concerning the use of aluminum wiring in the home.

Mr. Rein stated that the electrical contractor who worked on his new home refused to install copper wiring. Mr. Rein then requested advice on the possibilities of correcting situations where aluminum wiring has been installed in the home.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has no jurisdiction to resolve private disputes between a homeowner and an electrical contractor. However, as you are aware, we will be holding public hearings in the near future on the safety aspects of residential electrical wiring systems utilizing aluminum conductors. Among other things, this hearing will address the question of the extent of the potential dangers posed by aluminum conductors and what measures can and should be taken by the Commission or by individual homeowners.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has not formulated standards for the safe design and use of aluminum wiring at this time. Until such standards are developed, after completion of ongoing research, it is impossible for us to say whether a given item, or use thereof, represents an unreasonable risk of injury to the user.

Corrective action, suggested by industry sources, in cases where old type aluminum wire bearing the Underwriters' Laboratories Type EC label is used with wiring devices (receptacles, switches, etc.) other than the new devices marked CO/ALR, is as follows:

ADVISORY OPINION

1. For highest level of safety, replace all outlets and switches in branch circuits (20 ampere or less) with devices marked CO/ALR by Underwriters' Laboratories, making sure wire wraps 3/4 turn clockwise around every terminal screw and that these screws are tightened to at least 12 inch-pounds of torque. All terminal screws at service panel and in higher ampere circuits should be checked and tightened, if required.

2. For a somewhat lower level of safety, remove all cover plates and inspect devices, replacing those that show indications of a poor connection, as well as those carrying loads of more than a few hundred watts.

If Mr. Rein has further questions concerning the safety of the wiring in his home he might contact a building inspector or skilled electrician to examine his wiring system.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
RICHARD O. SIMPSON
Richard O. Simpson
Chairman

AHSchoem:clb:2/21/74 CC#-2941

cc: Chairman Simpson
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