

# NEWS from CPSC

## U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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### GE Agrees to Pay \$1,000,000 Fine for Delay in Reporting Product Defect to CPSC

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced today that the General Electric Co. (GE), of Fairfield, Conn., has agreed to pay the Government a \$1 million civil penalty ([PDF copy of the Settlement Agreement](#)). The fine settles allegations that GE knowingly failed to report to CPSC in a timely manner a defect with certain models of dishwashers. Under the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA), manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers must immediately report information about potentially hazardous products to the Commission.

"This settlement puts companies on notice that they must notify CPSC without delay when they learn of product hazards or consumer injuries," said Commission Chairman Hal Stratton. "We intend to enforce these requirements vigorously and there will be serious consequences for companies that fail to report such information quickly. The Commission will investigate and seek penalties against those who violate federal safety laws."

CPSC alleged that beginning in 1992, GE, one of the largest manufacturers of household appliances in the world, became aware of incidents of fire, smoking and melting related to the energy-saver slide switches on six models of dishwashers. The slide switches can overheat, causing the plastic to melt, and in some cases, ignite. Between January 1992 and November 1998, GE received 49 reports of fires that involved melted switches. By the time the company first reported to the Commission in November 1998, it knew of at least 111 incidents involving fire, smoke, or melting of the switches on these dishwashers.

In agreeing to settle this matter, GE denies that it knowingly violated the CPSA.

GE manufactured 3.1 million of the GSD500D, GSD500G, GSD540, HDA467, HDA477, and HDA478 model dishwashers between 1983 and 1989. All of these models have identical slide switches that allow consumers to choose between a heated and non-heated drying cycle. In December 2000, CPSC and GE announced a [free repair option](#) in the form of a rewiring for the dishwashers. A GE-authorized technician will rewire the slide switch at no cost to consumers. The rewire program supplements the original rebate program announced in October 1999. In that recall, GE provided consumers with a rebate toward the purchase of a new dishwasher. CPSC and GE announced the supplemental rewiring option to increase the effectiveness of the [original rebate program](#).

Consumers who have one of these recalled dishwashers should immediately discontinue use, unlatch the door, and contact GE anytime at (800) 599-2929 or log on to their website at [www.geappliancerecall.com](http://www.geappliancerecall.com)





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[Send the link for this page to a friend!](#) The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at [www.cpsc.gov/talk.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/talk.html). To join a CPSC email subscription list, please go to [www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.asp](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.asp). Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).