

Check for recalls on your appliances



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For Trib Total Media

There are over 200 million recalled appliances in the homes of unsuspecting Americans. It is not a surprise that it has become fairly common to see appliance recalls in the news. Recalled appliances are a major consumer problem. Approximately 20 to 25 percent of homes that have had all of their appliances checked for recalls have had at least one recalled appliance.

The first time a homeowner may be aware of an appliance recall is when a fire marshal tells them about the recall after a house fire. According to the CPSC, “more than 80 percent of appliance recalls are the result of improperly installed wiring, overheating motors/relays or other component failures that you can’t see.”

Great reasons to check appliances for recall

- Avoid expensive repairs because the manufacturer will pay to repair or replace the defective appliance
- Avoid dangerous defects and safety risks

Rest assured, by the time you see an appliance recall, more than a couple of these appliances have failed. Some may have started fires, or a bunch of them have stopped working, for one reason or another, and cost consumers a pile of money. The real story is not the appliances in a single recall, but the vast number of undiscovered recalled appliances now in American homes, and the difficulty in checking if you are living with any of them.

Every type of an appliance you can name in a home has had a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recall. We can use dishwashers as an example to understand the problem, but your range, refrigerator, microwave, and every other appliance you can name has some models that are recalled. Instead of “Russian Roulette,” you can play “Appliance Roulette.”

Maytag’s spring 2010 voluntary dishwasher recall announced by the Consumer Product Safety Commission



(CPSC) was featured in almost every news outlet when it occurred. It was one of the largest recalls of appliances since the CPSC started announcing recalls in 1974. The information was important and timely, but not many consumers ran over to their appliances and checked if their make and model of dishwasher was “on the list.”

In that recall, consumers were advised to visit <https://repair.maytag.com> to determine if the dishwasher in their home was one of the 1.7 million potential fire hazard dishwasher units under this specific recall.

The big surprise, if you looked at the dishwasher and said “nope, not a Maytag and I do not need to worry”, is that the Maytag brand is sold under multiple manufacturer names. A consumer would need to recognize that this same dishwasher could have been sold with any of the brand names including Maytag®, Amana®, Jenn-Air®, Admiral®, Magic Chef®, Performa by Maytag® and Crosley®. In case you are scratching your head wondering why all these makes are the same exact manufacturer, these multiple names allow competing retailers to offer products without fear of price comparisons.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission website home page assures consumers that “You can find information on over 4,500 product recalls and recall alerts using the various searches on this page”. That is true. The problem with the manufacturer and CPSC sites is that a consumer must wade through each of the individual recalls for that type of appliance to find out if their particular appliance is a potential hazard. This type of search is like searching the list of phone numbers in a phone book to



find a specific name instead of looking up the name of the person.

America is a beautiful country, the land of opportunity and invention. Nathan Thornberry from Carmel, Indiana saw that there is a market for a data base search that worked backwards from the make, model, and serial number for appliances. This service identifies appliances under CPSC Recall with a simple entry into an online data sheet. He further understood that if he put in place a system that allowed for monthly re-checking those numbers and permitted substitution for new appliances, he could sell advertising space on the monthly updates.

Nathan Thornberry’s solution allows consumers to search for recalls on all of their household appliances including heating, cooling, hot water, laundry and built in kitchen appliances in one, easy location for a single fee. Think of this database as your “phone book” for recalls.

The manufacturer’s sites, CPSC and Recall Check portals each provide important information. Once you know that your appliance is recalled, you need to know “what comes next”.

If there is a defect, the recall will include information about the nature of the recall and outlets where the product was sold. It will also include how to remedy the defect and the process of having the item repaired or replaced, usually for free. The recall report also includes the manufacturer’s contact details, the business hours of the manufacturer and what to do if the manufacturer fails to respond to a claim.

Every appliance has a make, model and serial number. These will be found somewhere on a plate on the appliance.

Ways to check an individual appliance for recalls

- Use Google, Bing or other search engine to find news stories about that brand name and model number. Read those stories and look for the range of serial numbers that are affected if recalled. This is a free method.
- Go to the Consumer Product Safety Council website www.CPSC.gov and search each of the recalls in that category of appliance for the make, model and serial number range of your appliance. This is another free service. With multiple names for each appliance, it often requires reading through many recalls for the same type of appliance.
- Copy the name plate information and enter your make, model and serial numbers on a portal service for recalls available on the internet such as www.ApplianceRecallCheck.com. There is a onetime charge of approximately \$ 30.00 for all of the appliances in a home. These services often do a monthly update of recalls at no additional cost.
- Contact a home inspector or appliance sales, installation or repair person who uses the Recall Check Service. Fees for this service may be waived for customers or range up to \$30.00.

Appliances play a major role in our lives. Checking on a broken appliance before repairs can save you a bundle. Checking all of the appliances in a home could help keep your family safe.

For links to additional information about appliance recalls, go to: www.envirospect.info/recalls

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