

## **Flexible Radiant Ceiling Heating Panels**

Toronto, Ontario, March 9, 1994: The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has been conducting investigations of incidents involving flexible radiant ceiling heating panels in cooperation with regulatory authorities in British Columbia, Ontario and Québec. British Columbia and Québec have ordered the disconnection of Thermaflex and Aztec-Flexel radiant ceiling heating panels rated 22 watts per sq. ft. in response to recent incidents, including some fires.

CSA recognizes that a potential problem exists with flexible radiant ceiling heating panel systems. While the product meets the existing standard, something is happening in the field to cause these fires. The direct cause in many of the incidents has not yet been determined because of the variables in the system, which include the product itself, the installation, construction practices and the proximity of radiant heating panels to other building construction materials and heat sources.

As a standards writing organization, CSA's role is to facilitate the development of standards, many of which become National Standards of Canada. Standards are developed through the voluntary consensus principle, using a committee with a balanced matrix of membership consisting of regulators, consumers, experts and manufacturers. As a certifier, CSA's role and responsibility is to ensure, through testing and evaluation, that products comply with the applicable National Standards. Radiant ceiling heating panels have been in use in Europe for more than 30 years and in North America for more than 10 years, and as such are designed to meet the requirements of the major certification organizations in Canada, the United States and Europe.

In response to the incidents occurring in the field, CSA is working very closely with all the parties involved; the regulatory authorities, the manufacturers, the electricians and the installers. In addition, CSA has conducted and continues to conduct additional testing of the product in its labs, simulating field conditions and abnormal situations. So far, CSA has not been able to duplicate the failures.

CSA will continue its research of the whole system to determine the root cause of the problem. Towards this end, CSA will use research data from all available sources and will contract the services of an independent engineering or research firm to assist in this endeavour.

Canada's first standard on Radiant Space Heating Systems was published in 1985, underwent a full revision in 1989 and is now a National Standard of Canada that reflects the latest technology at the time. Standards are dynamic documents that are continually reviewed and updated under the consensus process.

Accordingly, the committee for radiant ceiling panels recently held meetings to look at all the variables in the system and made a number of proposed changes to the standard that entail a systems approach to resolving the issues. The committee also made recommendations for changes to the Canadian Electrical Code and the National Building Code.

In British Columbia and Québec, homeowners having flexible radiant ceiling heating panels affected by the disconnect notices or moratoriums in their province, are urged to follow the directions given by the regulatory authorities.

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