

AFFIDAVIT OF ROBERT T. NOONAN
REGARDING INVESTIGATION AT RAVENSWOOD, WEST VIRGINIA

State of Maryland)
County of Montgomery) ss

I, Robert T. Noonan, being duly sworn depose and say:

I am an attorney with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (hereinafter referred to as Commission). In the 1974 hearings before the Commission on aluminum wiring, Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation submitted a report regarding an apartment complex at Ravenswood, West Virginia, having 21 buildings containing 99 three- and four-bedroom apartments. The complex was built between 1956 and 1957, and was wired with aluminum nonmetallic sheathed cable in its branch circuits. The report inferred that there had been no problems found in the branch circuit wiring. The Commission staff learned that there had been four fires reported to the fire department involving the branch circuit wiring in the complex and that the fires occurred in April 1974, August 1974, August 1975, and September 1977.

In May 1979, a Commission staff investigation team of which I was a member inspected electrical circuits in the complex. The team found the aluminum wire circuits in the complex were significantly different when compared to the type of circuits generally installed in homes during the "old technology" period between 1965 and 1973. The team also found that fires and other signs of dangerous overheating had indeed occurred in 15- and 20-ampere branch circuits.

The differences between the Ravenswood circuits and those circuits normally installed during the "old technology" period include: the use of brass-screw devices in the Ravenswood complex versus the widespread use of steel-screw devices with aluminum branch circuit wire up until new devices were introduced in 1973; the use of antioxidant compound on the wire binding screw terminations of many devices at Ravenswood versus dry screw terminations

without any oxide inhibiting compounds on devices during the "old technology" period; the use of precision installation methods of terminating the wire at the screw terminations of devices at Ravenswood versus a generally varied level of installation techniques utilized in other "old technology" circuits. Despite the use of brass screws, antioxidant compound and careful installation techniques, the investigation team still found indications of overheating devices at the Ravenswood project.

One of the fires reported in the local fire departments records was a major fire which apparently started at a kitchen receptacle and extensively charred the stud to which the receptacle outlet box was attached as well as the ceiling joists and some wire in the wall above it. Although the fire occurred in 1975, the damaged wood and charred wire were still present and were observed by the investigation team. The team also interviewed present tenants who had experienced problems of overheating at switches and receptacles.

Robert T. Noonan
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Subscribed and sworn to before me, an employee of the Consumer Product Safety Commission authorized by the Chairman of the Commission to administer or take oaths, affirmations, and affidavits this 22 day of August, 1979.

George J. Miller
Trial Attorney
George J. Miller, Trial Attorney