

RG&E consumer news

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Safety of Polyurethane Insulation

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I would like to comment on the safety of polyurethane and similar foamed plastic insulation which has been described by its manufacturers as "non-burning" or "self extinguishing," and by some fire officials and a government agency as a possible fire hazard. But first, some background information.

RG&E recommends proper insulation as one of the most effective ways to conserve energy in the home. The Company gives information about the relative effectiveness of various kinds of insulation in slowing down the heat loss from your house. RG&E has stated that polyurethane is one of the most effective forms of insulation. This is true, but some further explanation about its properties and its installation is needed.

The Federal Trade Commission alleges that polyurethane insulation, once ignited, produces greater fire hazards than traditional materials: it spreads flame, generates extreme heat, and releases toxic gases more quickly. The Commission also feels that invalid testing standards enable the product to be classified as "non-combustible" in many building codes. The Commission stated that it is not making a blanket condemnation of polyurethane in construction, that the product can be used safely in many applications, but that it seeks to eliminate the unsafe uses of polyurethane.

Polyurethane is being studied by fire officials and standards groups, so more information should be available soon. But in the meantime, experts recommend that if you choose to buy urethane insulation, it should be a high quality product with a high degree of fire resistivity, because some are more fire-resistant than others, it should be installed with a protective barrier such as gypsum wallboard or plaster, and the manufacturer's and installer's safety recommendations should be checked carefully before installing it.

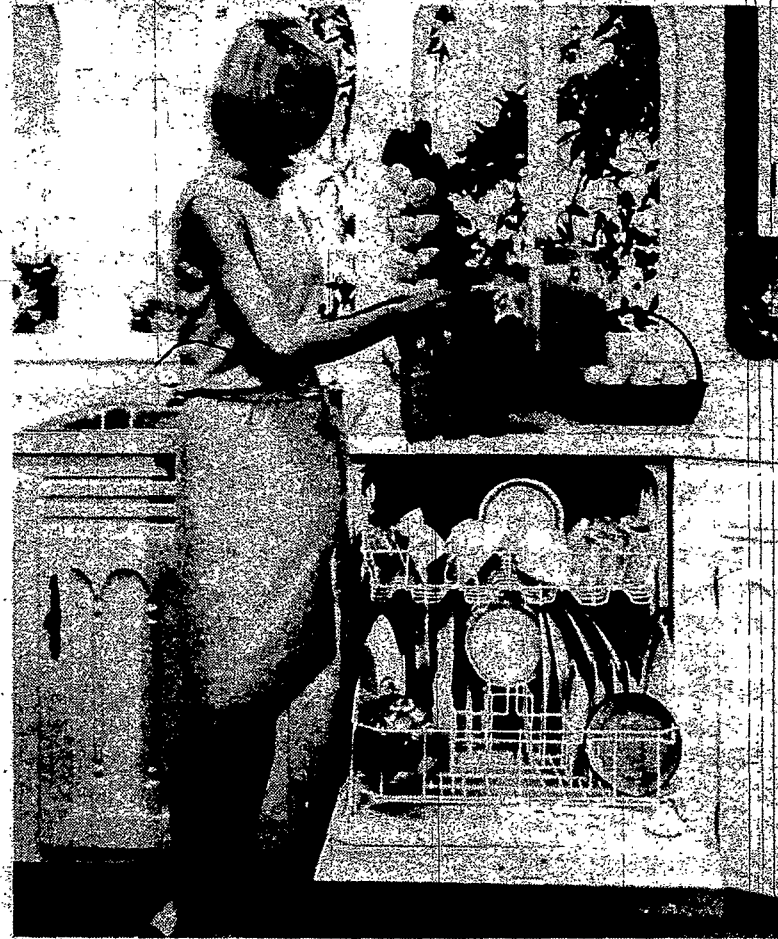
Various experts have given these opinions: A professor from Ohio State University states that there are large differences in flammability among different types of urethane foams. The major complaint of the FTC is that the tests used to evaluate flammability of foams is

not appropriate — not that all foams are hazardous when properly used. Proper use requires substantial protection on both sides, not simply a paper or foil facing. Adequate protection is particularly important for foams located in or on ceilings. However, a good fire retardant foam, properly used and installed, should produce no major fire hazard.

An article from Factory Mutual Insurance Company states that polyurethane and similar plastics need a thermal protective coating or barrier when used as insulation in construction. Further, that these foamed plastics can become quickly and massively involved in building fires if not shielded by a barrier, such as half-inch-thick gypsum wallboard or plaster.

A professor from the University of California says the hazardous uses of polyurethane are those where it is left exposed on the walls or ceiling. He recommends that the urethane be used inside a concrete or plaster wall. In this case there will be protective layer of non-combustible material. You should ask the company supplying your insulation to provide safe recommended practices for the use of their product.

Demonstration to be given on use and care of a dishwasher



Learn how to load your dishwasher at our April 30 demonstration.

Are you the owner of a new dishwasher? If you are and you would like to learn how to operate it most efficiently, you are invited to attend a demonstration on the "Use and Care of the Dishwasher," which will be held on Tuesday, April 30, in the Home Service Auditorium. The demonstration will be given at 1 PM and will be

repeated at 7:30 PM. There will be free parking in the Lawn Street parking lot, behind the RG&E office at 89 East Avenue, for the evening demonstration only. If you plan to attend one of the demonstrations, please fill in the coupon on this page and tell us which time you will be coming — at 1 PM or 7:30 PM.

The Old Appliance You Replace Can Help the Needy

The Home Economics Division of Social Services is operating a program in which they place donated used appliances and furniture in the homes of people who need them.

Since they have no funds to overhaul broken down items, they can accept only those appliances and furniture that are in good repair. All donations are tax deductible.

Right now there is a critical need for gas ranges, refrigerators and any usable furniture. The agency will make arrangements to pick up any item you may wish to donate and will deliver it to its new home. Please call them at 442-4580 if you wish to make a donation.

Insulating your home: A list of insulation Contractors in Rochester

- Rochester Company, Inc., N. Lake Road, Bergen.
- Langie Fuel Service, 35 Gibbs Street
- Egypt Foam & Roofing Co., 400 Mason Road, Fairport
- Eco Insulation Systems, 90 S. Washington Street
- Form Fab Insulation, Inc., 20 Stone Road
- C.F.W. Dry Wall, Inc., 175 Norman Street
- Laube Co., 370 South Avenue
- Ideal Laboratories, Inc., 344 Champion Street
- Dave Devolder, 242 East Main Street, Webster
- Keene Building Products, 8 Cairn Street
- L.B. & W., 19 Jefferson Avenue
- Spray Foam Company, 1606 Penfield Road
- Upstate Insulation Co., Inc., 3259 Winton Road, South
- Pineacres Construction

Appliance Service Call Booklet Available

Did you know that about 40% of all appliance service calls are unnecessary? For instance, have you ever called a serviceman when your washer was not working, only to have him find out that it was not plugged into the wall socket? This is not only embarrassing, it is also expensive — you still have to pay the serviceman for coming out to look at the appliance.

Several people at RG&E who talk with our customers regarding appliances — appliance servicemen and home economists, for instance — got together and contributed information from their experience which would help you avoid such unnecessary calls. This information has been compiled into a booklet entitled "How to Avoid Unnecessary Service Calls."

It contains many common problems that develop with appliances and possible solutions to these problems. For instance, you may feel that your clothes dryer takes too long to dry and needs to be looked at by a serviceman. Before calling a serviceman the book suggests that you check time setting: is it long enough for the amount of clothes you are trying to dry? Is the lint filter clean?

The booklet deals with many other appliances besides dryers: appliances such as a range, a refrigerator/freezer, dishwasher, garbage disposer, water heater, air conditioner, and humidifier among others.

Send in the coupon on the page for your booklet, "How to Avoid Unnecessary Service Calls." It could help you save money and prevent some embarrassing moments.

FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO: CJ-10
 Dept. 34 Rochester Gas and Electric
 89 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14649

I would like more information on the following items:

Name _____
 Address _____
 Town _____ Zip Code _____