



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Consumers asked to remove batteries from peaksaver® program thermostat

Seven local electricity distribution companies part of safety alert

Newmarket, Ontario (November 10, 2010):

Newmarket Hydro, along with six other Ontario electricity distribution companies, is issuing a safety alert today related to the White-Rodgers 1F88 thermostat to ask consumers to remove the batteries from the unit. This thermostat is currently in use in the peaksaver® residential conservation program in Newmarket and elsewhere.

This is a precautionary and interim measure in response to possible overheating and risk of fire involving the thermostat's batteries. Newmarket Hydro is part of an industry team working with other utilities, the thermostat's manufacturer and other stakeholders on an acceptable longer-term solution.

Because the batteries are used only to provide backup for the unit's clock during power outages, removing them will not affect the thermostat's normal functioning. In the event of a power interruption, the clock would simply have to be reset once power is restored in the same manner as any electronic clock in a household appliance.

Of more than 170,000 thermostats installed in the United States, there have been three reported product incidents; with approximately 7,500 thermostats installed in Ontario, there has been one instance reported in this province. Subsequent testing by the manufacturer as well as independent third-party testing has determined that, under certain circumstances, leakage from the thermostat's two AA alkaline batteries may lead to overheating and the risk of fire.

There have been no product recalls in either Canada or the United States. However, concerns have been raised with the Electrical Safety Authority and Health Canada, both of whom are expected to investigate further.

Approximately 1,500 residential customers of Newmarket Hydro have had this model of thermostat installed as part of the peaksaver® and an earlier conservation program. The utility is currently contacting those customers to advise them on the precautionary removal of the batteries from their thermostats.

"Our information is that the potential risk is extremely low," says Larry Herod, Newmarket Hydro's director of distribution services. "But safety is always our number one concern, so we're being proactive on this issue. We're advising consumers not to disconnect the thermostat but only to remove the batteries."

For more information, consumers may contact Newmarket Hydro's customer service team at (905) 895-2309 or visit online at www.nmhydro.ca and follow the links.

In addition to Newmarket Hydro, the other local electricity distribution companies in Ontario issuing an alert on this thermostat include Tay Hydro, PowerStream, Innisfil Hydro, Peterborough Distribution, St. Thomas Energy, Essex Powerlines and EnWin Utilities.