

CPSC Recall Research

1. <http://www.cpsc.gov>
2. Click on “Recalls and Product Safety News.”
3. Up pops a new window, “Recalls and Product Safety News.” Halfway down you will find “Product Type” “Company” and “Product Description”
4. Product type, for example, will show you all dishwashers. Let’s do it. Click on “Product Type.”
5. Up pops a screen “Find Recalled Products by Product Type.” Over at the right you’ll see “Optional.” Let’s do a search on Kenmore dishwashers since I know there was a recall issued on February 25, 2005. In that white box under Optional, type the first three letters of dishwasher, “dis”, and click on simplify search.
6. The screen is reconfigured to show you all the product types that include the three letters “dis.” There are four categories. Click on “dishwashers” and then click on “FIND”.
7. Up pops a window “Results of Your Search.” You should see nine lines; the seventh line is Kenmore. However, look at the date of the recall: February 15, 1993. Remember in Item #5 that I told you I knew there was a Kenmore recall of February 25, 2005? This is why I don’t use the “Product Type” category. In using the “Product Type” category, you will have to read all nine of those dishwasher lines to make sure you haven’t missed any Kenmore recalls. Kenmore currently is manufactured by Whirlpool corporation, so the very first recall line, “Whirlpool Corporation Recall of Dishwashers (February 25, 2005)” is the one we wanted. Click on that line, and a new screen pops up, “NEWS from CPSC” Scroll down and you’ll see that Whirlpool and Kenmore brands are involved. So you can see that if you just rely on headlines, your search could be faulty, exposing you to liability if you offer this service. It’s important that you know that brand names are not necessarily manufacturer names.
8. Now click on your browsers’ “back” button four times to get back to the “Recalls and Product Safety News” page and I’ll show you a better way.
9. Now click on “Company.”
10. Up pops the “Find Recalled Products by Company” page. Under “Optional”, type the first three letters of Kenmore, “ken”.
11. The screen is reconfigured to show you all the companies that include the three letters “ken.” Click on “Kenmore” and then click on “FIND”.
12. Up pops a window “Results of Your Search.” You should see nineteen lines of products that Kenmore has recalled. Note that the headlines show “Kenmore” in only six of them yet you know that all nineteen have the word “Kenmore” somewhere in the text of the recall notice. Therefore, just look for the ones that have “dishwasher” in the headline since you know that “Kenmore” and “dishwasher” gives you what you want.
13. There are only three dishwasher headlines: February 25, 2005; May 29, 1996; and February 15, 1993. You’re there. Now here’s what I put in my report if the recall does not apply to my dishwasher:
 - A. Kenmore participated in a dishwasher recall in February 2005, May 1996, and February 1993. The model number and/or serial number indicates that this specific unit was not involved in the recall.
14. If my dishwasher is involved, this goes into the report:
 - B. **Kenmore participated in a dishwasher recall in February 2005, May 1996, and February 1993. The serial number indicates that this unit was involved in the February 2005 recall. Please read the documentation at the end of this report from the Consumer Product Safety Commission and follow its directions. There is the possibility that this unit has been repaired by the manufacturer or its representatives, but only the manufacturer will have that information.**
15. The reason for putting 13.A. in the report is to show them that they got their money’s worth. Also, you don’t want a visiting relatives to show up, look at the Kenmore dishwasher, and exclaim, “Kenmore recalled their dishwashers last month.” That’s typically what your newspaper headlines use, commonly called scare tactics. You want your Client to be assured that you know about the recall last month and that your Client’s dishwasher is not involved in the recall.
16. If the dishwasher is involved, print out the CPSC recall notice and include it with your report.
17. Now you truly have done your Client a great service.
18. We record manufacturers’ names, model numbers, serial numbers, and dates of manufacturer for most everything. We do exclude personal property (refrigerators, washers, dryers, window air conditioners, countertop microwaves) unless they are conveying as part of a condominium. For anything other than a condominium, personal property is always excluded. And we tell our client that using this in our reports

(text in red below is the full version which gets edited depending on the situation; do not use all three of these paragraphs together because they conflict with one another):

We have recorded the manufacturer names, model numbers, and serial numbers of appliances and have checked for safety concerns or recalls. Recall or safety information reported by the CPSC is in this report.

Because of insurance restrictions concerning personal property, we do not record any information from personal or free-standing appliances (e.g., televisions, refrigerators, washers, dryers, window air conditioners, countertop microwaves, etc.), or non-standard systems (water modification systems, central cleaning systems, etc.). Even when personal appliances convey with real estate, they are not inspected, tested, or evaluated, and an opinion of the condition or function of such appliances is not presented in this report. Additionally, we did not check to see if there are any safety concerns or recalls on such personal appliances. If personal appliances become involved in the real estate transaction, we will be happy to do safety concern/recall research at no charge; just call or email us the manufacturer's name, type of appliance, model number, and serial number, or as much information as you can provide. Although we will visit your property to find and record the information for you, we do charge for our time and effort.

When you close escrow on this property, give us a call to request our free Appliance Package.

19. You don't have to include the names and numbers in your report if you don't want to. I only hire very good typists and computer people, so we usually include the names and numbers, although that is changing very shortly, which is where our "free Appliance Package" comes in. For our BASIC inspection, the "free Appliance Package" gets edited to "our \$149 Appliance Package", available to you for just "[STANDARD inspection price minus BASIC inspection price]. For STANDARD inspections, it will be free, and will include all the names and numbers, typical maintenance information, typical problems, etc.
20. It typically is fairly easy to find the names and numbers at the inspection. However, sometimes the name plate is not readable or is missing. Simply tell your Client that some information was missing and that a complete recall search could not be done. However, if you always record the manufacturer name, and I've never found it missing—they only put it in five billion different places—then you'll always be able to do good research. If you find a Kenmore dishwasher that has been recalled, but you don't have the model and/or serial number, you can include the CPSC recall notice for your Client and recommend that they contact the manufacturer's representative. However, if you take pictures of all the appliances like we do, then you can sometimes compare your picture to the picture on the recall notice and see that it could be or definitely is not involved. Additionally, if you record the heat source (gas or electric), that will also help you since sometimes the headlines read "Whirlpool recall of gas ranges" or something like that; then you know that the Whirlpool electric range you took a picture of is not involved.
21. Believe it or not, there are not that many recalls that affect us as home inspectors. So after doing this for about 50 inspections or so, you'll know which appliances have been recalled. You'll also get to be so good at this that your Client will think you are a walking encyclopedia. As an example, let's look at Kenmore microwave/hood units since it is a good example and you're already on the Kenmore "Results of Your Search" page.
22. Click on "Whirlpool Recalls Microwave-Hood Combination (October 16, 2001)", about half way down. Note again that we know Kenmore is involved because we did a search on Kenmore, so Whirlpool must have manufactured Kenmore microwave/hood units. Note that it involves Whirlpool, KitchenAid, and Kenmore. This is a really easy one because you have only three brands, and they all have a serial number that begins with "XC." So if you see a Whirlpool, KitchenAid, or Kenmore microwave/hood unit that has a serial number beginning with "XC", you can unequivocally state to your client at the inspection that the unit was recalled in October 2001. Now let's have some more fun. In the recall notice, about half way down, click on www.whirlpool.com and let's go to the whirlpool site since there probably is more information there. (Whirlpool is messing with their site, so you may get jumped around a lot; if you do, for right now try typing in <http://repair.whirlpool.com/MWR/index.htm>, which will take us where we want to go.) You'll be at the Whirlpool recall page for "Over the range microwave hood combination"). Scroll down and click on "Frequently Asked Questions." Go down to the seventh question, "I just purchased a . . ."). Note the answer to the question concerning the square green sticker. So, in the field, if you find the right manufacturer with an XC serial number but with a square green sticker next to it, then you can tell your Client unequivocally, "The microwave/hood was recalled in October 2001 but has been repaired by the manufacturer." Client will be absolutely amazed.
23. Since there really are not that many recalls that concern us as home inspectors, you could also make a recall three-ring binder with all the CPSC notices in it that concern us. Take the microwave/hood as an example. You could print out four copies, one for "microwave," and one each for "Whirlpool," "KitchenAid," and

“Kenmore.” Then if you’re out in the field, you can look it up right there if you do onsite reports or have access to a wireless Internet connection.

24. Now, to complete our task, let’s go back to the CPSC home page, ww.cpsc.gov.

25. Click on “Sign up for email announcements.”

26. Type in your email address.

27. Click on the first radio button: “All CPSC press releases and recalls, the Public Calendar, and CPSR notification (list name: all). Then click on submit.

28. Now, with your knowledge about recalls and, as a subscriber, you will never miss a recall about anything. Your knowledge base is complete and your liability is nil, yet you have done a great service to your Client. Remember that the microwave/hood notice at the Whirlpool site said, “Important Safety Notice -- Fire hazard, do not use microwave.” That sounds serious to me. So what good is a structurally sound house that has been renovated, has a new roof and beautiful landscaping, etc., if it burns down the night of move-in because of a faulty microwave/hood? Which, by the way, happened to me—that is why I offer this service free as part of my STANDARD, PREMIUM, and TECH inspections, and for a paid, valued-added fee on my BASIC inspections.

29. Happy inspecting. If you have any questions, email me and we’ll set an appointment for you to call so I can walk you through the process or help in any other way.