



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

c/o 71-75 Shelton Street
Covent Garden
London
WC2H 9JQ
www.nfcc.org.uk

[REDACTED]
Assistant Coroner for the coroner area of the Northern
District of Greater London

Sent by email to:
[REDACTED]

31 January 2025

Dear Mr Straker,

Thank you for raising the concern in relation to the deaths of Champagauri and Dipak Bhatt on 29 March 2023. It is with great sadness that I read about the circumstances of their deaths. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is committed to a culture of learning and improvement and seeks to support fire and rescue services (FRSs) to embed a learning culture. We actively track Prevention of Future Deaths Reports and share them with our members to ensure all opportunities to improve are taken.

In your report you have identified NFCC as an organisation that has the power to take action to prevent future fire deaths by receiving information from manufacturers on condensate pumps and RFI filters that are replaced on warranty, or that have been recalled. The purpose for this is so NFCC has a better understanding of where such parts are having problems.

Unfortunately, this is not currently within the remit of NFCC. However, we do support the single recall register, which was a key output of the Total Recalls campaign initiated by London Fire Brigade and rolled out nationally. This was created as a consumer-facing initiative and focused on products rather than parts that could be causing issues across multiple appliances. This is recorded on a national register which can be found here:

[Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/product-safety-alerts-reports-and-recalls)

In our shared experience, it can be extremely challenging to persuade manufacturers to recall products with known risks and there is a reluctance to share information on potential issues. In the past we have seen manufacturers only issue recalls after significant events and following public and political pressure, and in some cases the threat of legal action from Trading Standards (as part of the Primary Authority arrangement).

FRSs play a critical role in reporting products that lead to fires. However, determining the make and model of appliances involved in fires can be extremely difficult for Fire Investigators, let alone the component parts that may have been at fault. This is because the products are often so badly damaged, and owners do not always have this information. A key ask of London Fire Brigade's campaign was for manufacturers to have the make and model on each appliance in a material that couldn't be destroyed by fire (e.g. a metal plate)

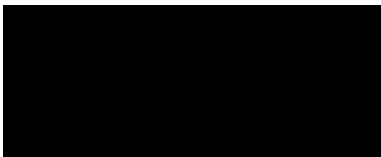
but not all manufacturers are doing this. See more here: [Model and serial number identification | London Fire Brigade](#).

There is currently no obligation on manufacturers to share information when a fault is found in components in appliances with FRSs, and we would welcome support for manufacturers to share their risk assessments, or at least key elements of the risk assessment on request (including details of components), when patterns of faults are found that may present a risk to the public.

In response to the recommendations made, NFCC notes that there is currently a Product Safety and Metrology Bill, which is at the Report Stage in the Lords – following feedback from FRSs. There are powers outlined in section 7 of the Bill, which should enable sharing of information with emergency services (including FRSs). We believe it is important that this part of the bill clearly sets out a duty for manufacturers or commercial enterprises to share information on product/component safety faults (on request) that present a safety risk (of fire), to help prevent loss of life, safeguard our communities and homes.

The OPSS currently gather data regarding product safety issues and seek to share information on product safety risks with FRSs and with NFCC Fire Investigation Strategic Steering Group. However, NFCC believe that it is important that the Product Safety and Metrology Bill does not lose this particular clause during its passage through parliament.

Yours sincerely



Chair National Fire Chiefs Council