



Importance to Attention to Detail while Digging through Debris

A multiple fatality fire incident occurred within a mobile home near Minneapolis, MN. A small, portable space heater had been immediately identified as the alleged cause of the fire incident. Although, the subject space heater had been allegedly positioned within a small bedroom near the center of the structure for the mobile home, the entire contents of the structure were recovered by investigators for the family from the scene of the fire incident. The recovered artifacts and several containers of debris were collected, and presented for inspection and examination.

The examination of the subject space heater revealed that the product incorporated a ceramic heater element with Aluminum radiator fins. The electrical connections to the heater element consisted of three (3) spade terminals. The subject heater element exhibited melt on a section of the Aluminum fins near, and incorporating, one (1) of the three (3) spade terminals.



The Plaintiff's experts had alleged that the missing spade terminal was the contributing factor in the cause of the fire incident. The allegation of the fire cause was attributed to the missing spade terminal which became a high resistance connection that generated sufficient thermal energy to ignite the plastic housing of the subject space heater and nearby combustibles. An examination and analysis of the artifacts recovered from the collected debris revealed the existence of the "melted" spade terminal which the Plaintiff's experts had stated allegedly overheated, melted, and contributed to the ignition of the plastic housing during the ignition process.



Verification required a subsequent examination of the artifacts from one of the containers of the collected debris revealed that the alleged subject spade terminal was not melted and exhibited a reliable electrical connection. The alleged cause of the fire incident as being a high resistance connection was effectively eliminated as a potential cause of the fire incident.