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## Case Summaries

### Documenting Installation During Product Liability Investigations

BY MICHAEL DEHARDE, P.E., U.S. FORENSIC

**As a means of controlling costs, product liability investigations often involve engineering experts inspecting evidence shipped to them without benefit of a site inspection.**

Recently, U.S. Forensic had a case which demonstrated why documenting the in situ condition during the initial site visit can prove to be equally valuable.

Our firm was asked to pick up and retain a water heater from the 10th floor of a new condo building. We were asked to retain the water heater until the manufacturer was put on notice and a joint inspection was scheduled. While on site, we obtained permission to document the installation of the water heater.

The joint inspection of the water heater was scheduled several months later at our laboratory. The manufacturer's representative and I measured the flow of the leak with a flow meter and photos documenting the testing were taken. After confirming the leak, we stripped the outer shell and insulation off the water heater to find a leak at the seam weld of the tank. We cut a segment out and then sectionalized it. The manufacturer's representative obtained one section for further analysis of the weld, and U.S. Forensic

