

In My Opinion...

Dean Says:

Please, Don't Throw That Away!



Charlene Kidder

For many years I have suffered with the plague of adult-onset diabetes. This disease has become increasingly common for older adults.

Like many diabetics, I am gratefully able to control my blood sugar level through the use of pills and daily injections of synthetic insulin. In fact, at last count, I have to take nine different pills, some of them twice each day.

With every prescription bottle and with every vial of insulin, the manufacturer includes a tightly folded piece of paper. Like most people taking prescription medications, when I open a new box of pills or vial of insulin, I quickly discard the folded piece of paper.

Recently, as my hand approached the trash basket, I hesitated for a moment, and then decided to open the folded paper and set what it actually contained.

Imagine my surprise when I discovered that in very very small typeface, the manufacturer had given me a veritable treasure trove of information about the particular medicine and also about the particular symptoms the medicine intended to relieve.

I actually spent the better part of an hour, magnifying glass in hand, reading through the drug manufacturer's information sheet. In so doing, I learned some very interesting and quite helpful facts about Type II diabetes.

This made me think about all the times I have visited a construction site to inspect the progress of a fire alarm installation. In the trash barrel, I would usually spot the boxes that had contained the fire alarm components when the manufacturer packed them for shipping. Along with the boxes, the installer had also usually pitched the manufacturer's instruction sheet that came with the particular component.

It occurs to me that instead of throwing this information in the trash, the installer ought to preserve these sheets of information and pass them on to the owner of the system.

When Underwriters Laboratories Inc. or FM Approvals examines a fire alarm system component for listing, a part of the listing process includes a detailed review of the manufacturer's installation instruction sheet. That's right. The manufacturer's instructions becomes part of the listed product.

Recently, I asked Dick Wilkins of Wilkins Security to loan me a new smoke detector in the exact package it had arrived from the manufacturer. Dick kindly responded to my request and dropped off the box at my office.

At first, the amount of information the manufacturer had included on the

outside of the box itself completely amazed me. Just reading the details on the box took a couple of minutes and gave me some valuable insight into the product inside.

When I opened the box, I found that it contained not only one carefully folded piece of paper, but two. One paper provided the manufacturer's installation instructions. The second paper contained some valuable product liability information regarding the limitations of fire alarm systems.

The manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions contained no less than three tables of information, five detailed diagrams, very carefully and thoroughly written installation instructions, including several notes of caution, a detailed description of how to maintain the smoke detector, information regarding periodic testing of the detector, and a thorough list of product specifications.

To state the obvious, I became more and more impressed as I read through the manufacturer's instructions. Now, I am even more horrified that someone would throw this valuable document in the trash.

"Wait a minute," you may say. "Don't you think these instructions have simply become 'old news' to the installer? No wonder that he or she simply discards it when opening the component's box."

I suppose you could have a point. But then, I thought I had become an expert on diabetes. After all, I have struggled with this affliction for over 15 years. I have lost two toes as a result and have ended up with moderately severe health problems. And yet, I learned something by reading the "instructions" from the drug box.

Perhaps, a seasoned installer could still learn something by periodically reviewing the manufacturer's instructions. I even imagine that those instructions may change from time to time.

At the least, the installer could share the information with the owner of the system and even with the Authority Having Jurisdiction. So, please don't throw this information away! □

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