

\$4,350,000

Recreational Vehicle Explosion
PRODUCT LIABILITY

FACTS: Husband and wife purchased a used travel trailer. The furnace in the vehicle was not working. The husband removed the furnace from the vehicle. He brought it into a recreational vehicle service center for repairs. The furnace was repaired and returned to the husband. He installed the furnace back into the vehicle. He did not properly reconnect the propane gas line to the furnace. The next day the family went on a camping trip. While they were sleeping in the vehicle, the gas connection to the furnace leaked propane gas which migrated into the interior of the vehicle. The next morning the husband was the first one to get up. He attempted to light the stove to start a pot of coffee. As soon as he struck the match, the vehicle exploded.

CONTENTIONS: Plaintiffs claimed that the vehicle manufacturer was negligent for failure to install an LP Gas Leak Detector in the vehicle as standard equipment. Plaintiffs claimed that if an LP Gas Leak Detector had been present it would have sounded and alerted them to the leak. Plaintiffs further claimed that the connections for the gas line to the furnace should have been located on the exterior of the vehicle so that any leak at the connection would vent to the atmosphere and not into the interior of the vehicle. Plaintiffs also claimed that the service center was negligent for returning a loose furnace to Plaintiff's husband without having a qualified technician reinstall it in the vehicle.

INJURIES: Husband sustained burns to approximately half of his body surface and died 26 days later. Wife sustained burns to approximately 10% of her body. Nine year old child sustained small areas of minor burns to feet and hands.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards require all recreational vehicles to have LP Gas Leak Detectors. However, this standard did not take effect in California until just a few months after the subject travel trailer was manufactured.

DANCE v. THOR INDUSTRIES, INC. et al.

CASE NUMBER: BC V06600

SAN BERNARDINO SUPERIOR COURT