Amber PERS Recall FAQ

1. Why has the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a recall for Visonic’s Amber Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) Kits?

In accordance with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Visonic, Ltd. has issued a voluntary recall of the Visonic Amber Classic and Amber SelectX Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) Kits. When set to Common Area Mode (without any additional base stations included in the system that are set to other usage modes), the base stations in these kits will not remotely detect a low battery in a remote user pendant to indicate that it is time to replace the pendant battery to ensure the system continues to function.

2. How many kits will be affected by this recall?

Approximately 23,000 of these Amber PERS kits have been sold in the United States. These systems were sold and installed by professional alarm installation firms from January 2008 through June 2013. However, only systems configured in common area mode, without the inclusion of additional base stations to monitor individual users, are potentially impacted by the issue. Visonic estimates that a very small percentage of systems sold are configured in common area mode.

3. What is Common Area Mode?

The Amber PERS system has four different user modes: single user, multi-user, fire only and common area. Common area mode is intended for use in institutional settings to provide supplemental coverage for a large number of end users at one time (up to 250 units) when in common areas, such as a cafeteria or common social area. Common area mode is intended to provide supplemental coverage in a large facility when an end user is from their own room or apartment that contains additional Amber base stations configured for individual use.

4. How are you communicating with your installer customers and distributor partners about this recall?

We have issued a Technical Advisory Bulletin that details the four different operating modes of the Visonic Amber base stations, the appropriate use cases for each mode, and differences between these modes. We are also providing updated product manuals that detail specific configuration recommendations.

It’s also important to note that, regardless of what mode is used, each emergency pendant button and other wireless device used as part of the Amber system should be manually tested at least once a week to determine if there is a low battery condition, identify radio interference and to protect against faults.

5. What is the action that consumers should take if they own an Amber Personal Response Emergency System?

Common Area mode is not intended for homeowner use, and we believe that it is highly unlikely that an alarm installer would configure a unit in common area mode for individual homeowner use. Single user or multi user mode would be the more appropriate and likely configuration. Only professional alarm installers using specialized software can determine or modify an Amber base station’s usage mode.
If an end user is concerned that their Amber system may be configured in common area mode, they are urged to contact their alarm company for assistance. We have also established a toll-free telephone number that consumers can call and also a web page that consumers can visit for more information. The number is (800) 223-0020 from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET Monday through Friday and the web page is http://www.visonic.com/visonic-north-america/amber-recall.

6. Will the systems be replaced?

The solution to this issue is a simple system adjustment that can be done by a professionally-trained PERS system installer. The installer needs to determine if the system is set to Common Area Mode and if so, rest the unit to another mode or add an additional base stations in single or multi user mode to provide added functionality to the Amber system. In addition, owners are reminded to manually test their pendant regularly for a low battery as provided in the product instructions.

7. Is the recall being issued because of any specific situations where this PERS system has not worked and a person was injured?

We received one report of a pendant that failed to operate due to a low battery undetected by the base station in Common Area Mode, but no injuries have been reported.

8. Is there some compensation for companies who are currently using the product?

Visonic is not offering compensation for this issue, since it is limited to a very small number of installations, and the remedy is a simple system configuration change. Since there is a significantly low instance of failure of this product, we are asking our installer customers to go back to their customers and give them the updated information on how to install and set up this system properly.

9. The advisory was posted by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, but this product is available in other areas. Is this a global recall of this product?

This product recall is limited to the United States. However, we are advising our global partners of this issue to update their products so this issue does not occur elsewhere.

10. Is this the first recall in Visonic's history? If not, what have been some others and what were the reasons for those recalls?

I am not aware of any other product recalls.

11. Does this raise any questions about the manuals or operating instructions for any similar products in the Tyco portfolio?

No. This issue is concentrated on this one line of product, in a specific usage configuration.