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Lawyer's Newsletter Addresses Remington 700 Safety Problem

According to the *Firearms Litigation Newsletter*, the legal world is marshaling its forces for a major attack on Wilmington, Del.-based Remington Arms. The newsletter states: "The Remington Model 600 and 700 Bolt Action Rifles have both been known to fire without a trigger pull. These unintended firings can be caused by the Walker Fire Control System utilized in both guns.

"The heart of the defect in the Walker ... system is the unique portion of the design on which the Walker patent was based — the trigger connector. The failure of the trigger connector to do its job allows weapons which employ the Walker system to fire without a trigger pull upon release of the safety.

"The Walker fire control system of the Remington Models 600 and 700 can cause a misfire under various circumstances. The most common malfunction is a "Fire on Safety Release" (dubbed FSR by Remington) in which the rifle fires as a result of disengaging the safety. In essence ... the safety acts as a hidden second trigger."

The article goes on to state, "The Walker patent itself warns of this danger: 'It is essential that the safety means be so arranged that an inadvertent operation of the trigger while the safety is in 'safe' position will not condition the arm to fire upon release of the safety.'"

Because the Model 600 was a cheaper version of the 700, Remington felt quality control was more difficult to control, which meant the guns were more likely to malfunction. Remington recalled the Model 600, but not the 700, although the design was basically the same.

The article states, "In early 1979, Remington admitted that approximately 1 percent of its Model 700s (its own estimate) were susceptible to firing on safety release. Yet, because there were over 2 million Model 700 rifles in the field at that time and because (of) the self-serving estimate of the incidence of malfunction, Remington did not recall the Model 700... (By Remington's estimates) there were 20,000 defective rifles in the public's hands in 1979, and 30,000 today.

"Remington is clearly aware that its bolt action rifles are susceptible to inadvertent firing... Despite admitted (design flaws) Remington specifically elected not to recall the Model 700. Remington also opted not to warn of the possibility of inadvertent discharges."

There are several lawsuits pending against Remington in regards to this problem.