

It is the policy of this company to

- 1 Apply the principles of safety engineering to product design—to facilitate safe manufacture and safe use
- 2 Develop operating instructions embodying principles of safe operation—to assist the customer in the safe use of equipment
- 3 Embody safety research in product research and development to improve the product—from both manufacturing and customer safety standpoints

There is no question that machinery manufacturers should be interested in *product safety*. Ever-increasing legislative and legal awareness makes it imperative that voluntary action be taken to avoid the inevitable result of legislation that will force industry to follow specific requirements that may often not be workable.

The product designed (and labeled) with safety in mind is probably also better able to fulfill its intended function more efficiently and more economically. It should also be easier to market.

The designer should anticipate the use—and misuse—of a product.

Standards and consumer safety

Consumer safety can be advanced through the voluntary standards. The U.S.A. Standards Institute is studying the best ways to assemble the best thoughts available on the handling of major national safety issues—how to best coordinate and improve the prompt exchange of information about accidents of all kinds through a centralized agency. Underwriters' Laboratories sets standards for consumer safety.

Voluntary standards grow out of the commercial needs of the marketplace and the legal responsibilities in the seller-consumer relationship. Standards must be feasible, both from the standpoints of cost and engineering. Industry must help determine that feasibility.

Standards can best be written to include the products or quality of products, rather than excluding certain products or qualities. The good inclusive standard defines all levels of quality, leaving the preferred level to the user. The marketplace then selects preferences among the products meeting each

performance level—except when a particular level of performance is unacceptable to society because it is considered unsafe. Then, through a public process, the community can act to bar that level. In other words, adequate standards will be based upon performance, not the specifications of qualities, and all levels of performance must be included.

Products must be adequately labeled to inform the user of the level of performance they meet. In this way, competition based on product quality would be encouraged.

Why product safety is important

The prevention of accidents to customers using mechanical products is important.

- 1 To protect others from needless injury
- 2 Repeat sales are needed to stay in business
- 3 Third-party suits are increasing

Through reports of injuries or near-injuries, it is known that electrically or mechanically dangerous products have been sold. There are instances in which sweaters and thermal underclothing have caught fire or melted, resulting in serious burns to the wearer. Hair-set sprays have caused serious skin burns to the user. Product containers have even proven unsafe.

For nearly every quality hand or powered tool manufactured, some manufacturers have sold low quality and often weak or dangerous competitive tools at a lower cost.

The plastic frames of many eye glasses burn—some even flash. There have been many instances of injury reported.

Legal action against manufacturers exists and undoubtedly will increase. No manufactured product is immune. Certain types of manufactured products are more susceptible than others.

While to-date few safety professionals have had any responsibility for product safety, there definitely is a trend beyond the prevention of work injuries. In many companies, including insurance companies, safety personnel are called "loss prevention engineers" or "specialists" or the name of the department or division in which they are employed is known as the "loss prevention department" or "engineering and loss prevention department."

The safety professional usually has com-