

Product Safety Boosted At Homelite

The reassignment of one of its top executive-calibre engineers, Gil Buske, to full-time duty as director, product safety, is indicative of the emphasis Homelite has placed on consumerism with respect to its multi-product line covering chain saws, lawn/garden and construction equipment.

"Getting more effective products to the consumer is our goal," commented Homelite President Robert P. Straetz in Port Chester, New York. "And to attain this objective, we must be sure that what we sell does what it is supposed to do, efficiently and with every sensible precaution that, we can build into it. This is why we consider it top priority to place an expert such as Mr. Buske in an area where he can get into engineering design right away and apply the latest guide lines, standards and trends covering what's on the drawing board at the time."

The quite-spoken Buske, who joined Homelite in 1962 and served as director of construction equipment engineering for the past nine years, explained the scope of his new responsibility with low-key determination:

"We want to educate the user on the three w's . . . what to do, what not to do and, very importantly, why not to do it."

Buske is perhaps one of the most qualified technical experts on product safety in the country. He became deeply involved in safety 17 years ago, long before the beginning of the popular consumerism trend. He served as chairman of the first committee of the American National Standard Institute to set up safety standards for power mowers. It was a four-year task that was culminated with written standards published in 1960.



GIL BUSKE

Homelite Product Safety Director

A 1940 mechanical engineering graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and a registered professional engineer, Buske, since April, has been serving as chairman of the engineering specifications committee of the Power Saw Manufacturers Association. The group meets two days a month and is hopeful of presenting PSMA directors this summer with a recommended set of written safety specifications for gasoline powered chain saws.

"Possibly from the PSMA, our work will be referred to the American National Standards Institute," observed the trim, 171-pound, 5 foot 11-inch Buske, who, at Homelite, reports directly to corporate vice president and head of engineering, Marinus C. Bokelman.

Discussing the guidelines by which his committee functions, Buske said, "we are writing standards for chain saws to provide even greater protection for the user. Our role is to help the consumer use his product more effectively while enabling it to function at peak efficiency."

"The directions we are concentrating on," he continued, "include creating simple consumer instructions, defining safety specifications and making up an easy-to-grasp glossary or definition of terms."

A native of Chippawa Falls, Wisconsin, and father of five, Buske compared the need for explicit safety standards with that required by the automotive industry. "Cars, you know," he explained, "are probably

the most common lethal weapon we have when improperly used or abused, yet no one is saying not to drive. What we hope to accomplish with chain saws is to make sure the user gets a saw that is as safe as possible to make, with the best directions that we can create, so that he can understand easily how to use the product in the way it was intended to be used."

At Homelite, Buske is devoted to seeing that company products conform to existing regulations in the United States, "and as far as we can, outside the U. S."

His mandate for the Port Chester, New York company is to see all Homelite products conform to regulations and are as safe to use as possible in order to continue "the Homelite tradition of over 50 years of quality, ruggedness, ease of service and dependability, all within the framework of a competitive price structure."

Prior to joining Homelite, Buske served as chief engineer for Motomower, Richmond, Indiana, manufacturer of lawn and garden equipment, 1958-62; chief engineer for Motor Wheel Corporation, Lansing, Michigan, maker of lawn and garden equipment, heaters and furnaces, 1954-58; and from 1944-53 he was involved with outboard motors and small gasoline engines and electrical appliances.



WHEN "TREE FARMERS OF The Year" distinction for state of Connecticut was recently bestowed on Ralph G. Ingalls (right), Ingalls Tree Farm, of Brooklyn in that state, McCulloch Corporation's traditional presentation of a chain saw had a special significance — Ingalls is also McCulloch dealer! Connecticut Grange's Richard Herrman makes presentation above, with cooperation of distributor Ronconi Equipment Co., Larchmont, New York.

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