

ONTARIO Raises the Bar for ELECTRICAL Products

by Gary Weidner



In addition to requiring that electrical products (including electric pressure washers) sold in the Canadian province of Ontario bear a safety approval, the government of Ontario will very shortly require registration of the product manufacturer before such a product may be offered for sale within the province.

Ontario Regulation 438/07 states that “No person shall use, advertise, display, sell, offer for sale or other disposal any electrical product or device unless it has been approved in accordance with this regulation.” Additionally, the Ontario Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is requiring manufacturers of electrical products sold in the province to register with ESA between April 1 and August 30, 2009. The ESA is a “delegated administrative authority” accountable to the government of Ontario and responsible for administering and enforcing part of the province’s electrical code and Regulation 438/07.

Besides registering, manufacturers must report to ESA any serious electrical incident, accident, or product defect; assist in the investigation of such; and undertake notification of the public.

Some additional facts:

- Registration will cost \$350 Canadian, with a yearly renewal fee of \$300.

- The registration requirement includes manufacturers of components as well as complete products.
- Products covered include consumer, commercial, and industrial.
- “Manufacturer” is defined as “the entity whose legal name appears on the certification or field evaluation report and is the owner of the certification or field evaluation.”
- Registered manufacturers will be listed in an online public database.
- Small product quantities do not exempt the manufacturer. “All manufacturers of field evaluated electrical products must also be registered.”

Visit www.esasafe.com to download the legislation, guidelines, and FAQs. Questions may be emailed to product.safety@electricalsafety.on.ca.

GF-5 Is Coming

A new specification for gasoline-fueled engine oil, called GF-5, is on the way. (The present specification is GF-4.) The new oil is intended to deliver slightly better fuel economy. The GF-5 specification also requires greater sludge and deposit control, better retention of phosphorous (an anti-wear agent that can damage emissions systems), and tests for elastomer seal compatibility and oil aeration.

The new specification is no small undertaking, and it's not just a pencil and paper thing. Validation tests will be run by two labs, Southwest Research Institute and Intertek, and will cost about \$700,000, to be funded by the oil and automotive industries.

Engine oil specifications are issued by the International Lubricant Standardization and Approval Committee (ILSAC), a multi-national organization. The new oil should be on the market and available for your truck's crankcase by summer 2010.

Chinese Are Becoming Innovators

According to a recent article in *World Trade* magazine, for the period from 2001 to 2007 Japan had 37 percent of all new patent applications, the U.S. had 27 percent, and China had 12 percent. However, projections indicate that the rapid and steady growth in the rate of Chinese patent applications will put that country in the number one spot by about 2012.

The article cites a report from Thomson Reuters Scientific, and says regarding the years ahead that "China is moving away from traditional agriculture and manufacturing industry and concentrating more on innovation, especially in areas such as chemical engineering."

They're Baaack... OSHA revisits SDoC issue

Following upon the rejection of a 2005 proposal from the Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC) that the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) accept Supplier's Declaration of Conformity (SDoC) for compliance of IT products with safety standards, OSHA is once again exploring acceptance of SDoCs, but this time it's for many electrical and electronic products used in the workplace.

This time the proposal for acceptance of SDoCs came from the European Commission. The proposal seeks SDoC coverage for all electrical products that come under the EC's

Low Voltage Directive. In essence, that means almost all ordinary electrical products.

The EC claims that OSHA's third-party certification requirements cause an "imbalance in market access" for "transatlantic trade in electrical products." The EC contends that "European consumers and workers experience a high if not higher level of electrical safety as their counterparts in the U.S."

Tooting its horn for the present U.S. system, OSHA says, "One measure of the effectiveness of OSHA's current system is recalls issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The OSHA NRTL [Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory] Program staff reviews these recalls, and for those involving products that have been certified by an NRTL, the staff has not identified a recall that was due to improper testing by an NRTL."

Unfortunately a description of the other half of the U.S. product safety compliance scene is missing from OSHA's remarks. What is missing is any mention of or data concerning safety problems in the workplace caused by products that were supposed to have been certified by an NRTL, but in fact carried no certification. (In the U.S., it is permitted to manufacture, sell, purchase, or own, including ownership by employers, most products even if a given product bears no certification of compliance to any safety standards.

It is not unheard of for an employer to purchase a non-certified product for employee use. This sort of activity might be thought of as roughly the counterpart to European CE-marked products that do not actually comply with applicable safety standards.

To view the related documents and all submitted comments, go to www.regulations.gov and enter docket number OSHA-2008-0032 in the search box. OSHA will eventually publish a decision in the Federal Register. *cr*



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