



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

April 21, 1998

Called
ms Paul
July 16, 1998
Question is it
OKay to send to PT1
or you send copy to
B. Curson @ DebraJut?

Gary Schrempp
Underwriters Laboratories Inc.
12 Laboratory Drive
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-3995

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to the Standard for *Stationary and Fixed Electric Tools*,
UL 987

Dear Mr. Schrempp:

The staff of the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is concerned that the current requirements of UL 987, the Standard for *Stationary and Fixed Electric Tools*, may not fully protect the public against the hazards posed by the blade of a table saw. CPSC estimates that approximately 30,000 table saw injuries a year are treated in hospital emergency rooms. Of those injuries, 92% are to the finger and hand, most involving lacerations and amputations. The staff is aware of incidents where the user has permanently removed the table saw's blade guard. In about one-third of CPSC's in-depth investigation reports from 1991 to 1995, hand injuries occurred on table saws that did not have the blade guard installed. The fact that user's are removing a safety device is of concern to the CPSC staff.

Sections 40.9 and 40.10 of the current standard call for a blade guard that shall completely enclose the sides and top portion of the cutting blade. The blade guards found on the majority of UL listed table saws consist of a hinged rectangular channel of transparent plastic that rests over the blade. The guard is attached to the table saw with a wing nut. The CPSC staff realizes that certain table saw cuts cannot be performed with a guard. However, experienced saw users comment that "the typical stock guard that comes with many saws is so frustrating to mount, align, adjust, remove, and work with, you're tempted to leave it off permanently" (Ernie Conover, "Use a premium blade guard", *American Woodworker*, February 1998). The CPSC staff believes that sections 40.9 and 40.10 address blade guard coverage without emphasizing the necessary performance required to encourage proper guard use.

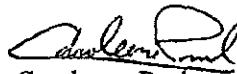
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CPSC staff recommends that sections 40.9 and 40.10 be modified to specify performance requirements that would discourage users from removing the blade guard. An example of a guard that may meet such requirements is a tensioned circular guard (similar to those found on radial arm saws and portable circular saws) that retracts under the table or a cantilevered overarm guard that mounts on the side of the saw table instead of directly behind the blade. We also suggest that UL consider the inclusion of a rigidity test similar to one found in a draft European standard (Section 5.2.7.1.c of prEN 1870-1, "Safety of Woodworking Machines - Circular Sawing Machines - Part 1: Circular Saw Benches (With and Without Travelling Table) and Dimension Saws.")

These comments represent the opinion of the Commission staff, and have not been reviewed or approved by the Commission. If you have any questions or comments, please give me a call at (301)504-0494 x1292.

Sincerely,



Caroleene Paul
Mechanical Engineer
Directorate for Engineering Sciences

cc: James Beyreis, UL Northbrook
Gordon Gillerman, UL Washington