

Products

by David Frane

Gun Foam

Polyurethane foam is the best way to insulate small voids, but the plastic applicator tubes that come with the cans make for slow, messy work. To improve efficiency, five *One-Component Polyurethane Foam Gun Applicators* are now offered by the makers of Touch'n'Seal. The reusable applicators are threaded to accept 24-ounce cans of the company's foam products. Gun styles include the disposable Econo-Gun, as well as the \$55 Sharpshooter IV (pictured) and other models, which vary in service life, nozzle length, and supply port location. According to the manufacturer, Touch'n'Seal foam was recently reformulated to set up faster — it is said to be tack-free in 8 minutes and fully cured in 30 to 60 minutes — and is available in a range of expansion rates. For large gaps, the company's High-Yield Foam expands 300%; RX (reduced expansion) foam expands just 30% and is intended for use around door and window frames. The foam costs \$7 to \$8 a can.

Contact: Convenience Products, 866 Horan Dr., Fenton, MO 63026; 800/325-6180.



Cordless Recip Saw

If you've ever run out of cord or found yourself on top of a ladder with a saw that wasn't getting any juice, you'll want to check out Milwaukee's new 18-volt, cordless *Power-Plus Sawzall*. It's the first cordless tool to seriously address the needs of tradesmen who make intermittent use of a recip saw. The saw has the same front end as the Milwaukee corded Sawzall Plus and sports a new keyless blade clamp. According to the manufacturer, the battery stores enough power to cut 125 pieces of 1½-inch schedule-40 PVC, or nine 4x12-inch duct openings through ¾-inch subfloor and ⅜-inch underlayment. At 8¼ pounds, it's in the same weight class as its corded counterparts. Retail price for a saw, a charger, and one battery is expected to be around \$320.

Contact: Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp., 13135 W. Lisbon Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005; 414/783-8311.



Long-Lasting Blades

How many recip saw blades have you destroyed trying to cut abrasive material? If the answer is "Too many," you may want to check out *Nitro* carbide-tooth recip saw blades. According to the manufacturer, these blades can cut plaster, slate, tile, nonferrous metals, and — of course — wood. Unlike abrasive wheels, they'll cut cement board without producing a lot of dust. But carbide tips are brittle, so avoid cutting ferrous metal and nail-embedded wood. Blades range from 4 to 12 inches in length and are available with 3 or 6 teeth per inch. A 9-inch blade costs about \$10.

Contact: Century Drill and Tool Co. Inc., P.O. Box 12767, Green Bay, WI 54307; 800/621-4776.



Tub Deck Template

We're all familiar with undermounted sinks, but more and more bathroom designs are calling for undermounted tubs and whirlpools. In the past, some poor carpenter spent hours making a template for the people fabricating the stone or solid surface deck. Getting smooth curves and the proper overhang was difficult. Until now, that is. Kohler recently introduced its *Undermount Installation Kit*, which includes instructions and full-size templates for flush and overhung rim conditions. The kit costs around \$25 and is available for a number of Kohler tubs and whirlpools.

Contact: Kohler Co., 444 Highland Dr., Kohler, WI 53044; 800/456-4537.



Clip-On Electrical Box

Steel studs, long used in commercial work, are now making their way into residential projects. But one problem with metal framing is that it's hard to attach things to. Racó's *Box-Loc* electrical boxes cut rough-in time



because they clip rather than screw onto studs. These 4-inch boxes attach to either side of a metal stud and can be unclipped and repositioned in seconds. Box-Locs require the use of plaster rings and cost twice as much as standard boxes — a 4-inch box and bracket go for about \$1.10 — but the manufacturer claims labor savings more than make up for the added expense.

Contact: Racó Inc., 3902 W. Sample St., P.O. Box 4002, South Bend, IN 46634; 219/234-7151.

Waterproof Lumber

The one good thing you can say about pressure-treated lumber is that it doesn't rot. Unfortunately, it does split and twist as it dries and, left unprotected, it will break apart after enough wet/dry cycles. *Olympic-Protected Waterproofed Pressure-Treated Wood*, produced in a joint effort by the makers of Olympic-brand stain and CSI pressure-treated lumber, is a new kind of PT lumber that's claimed to be less likely to check, split, or warp. An Olympic waterproofing formula (MP5) is mixed with chromated copper arsenate (CCA) and injected into yellow pine. The CCA prevents rot and the MP5 keeps the wood from reabsorbing moisture. The product's manufacturers will concentrate on treating components like deck boards, rails, posts, and balusters, which will

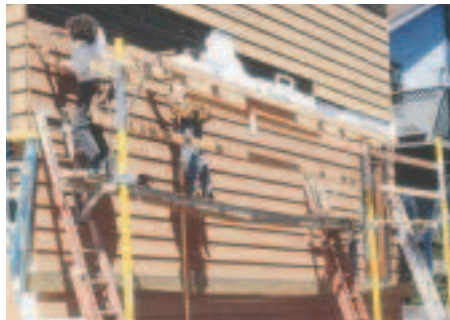


become available in early 1997. Retail prices will run about 20% over the cost of standard PT lumber.

Contact: PPG Architectural Finishes Inc., One PPG Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15272; 800/235-5020.

Safer Staging

Pump jacks and pipe staging are popular on job sites, but the quickest way to get up on the side of a building is to use ladder jacks. Out on the plank, though, there's no safety rail or spot to store tools and materials. *The Railing Jig* solves this



problem by adding safety rails and workbench to your ladder jack setup. Each jig consists of a pair of posts and brackets, enough to support two safety rails, a toe-board, and a worktable. With a miter saw on the worktable, you don't need a cut man on the ground, and according to the manufacturer, the rails and safety chains increase output by allowing carpenters to better concentrate on production. The Railing Jig sells for \$595.

Contact: Railing Jigs Inc., P.O. Box 630, Newport, OR 97365; 800/616-5447.

Heat Shield

A friend of mine lost half of her house to a fire started by a plumbing torch. I don't know how much it set the plumber back, but I'm certain it was a lot more than the cost of an *Insurance Pad* heat shield. The flexible graphite shield protects building components from the heat generated by soldering and brazing. According to the manufacturer, these pads outlast traditional silica-based shields and can withstand temperatures up to 2500°F. A 6x9-inch pad costs around \$18; a 9x12-inch pad is \$28.

Contact: The Mill-Rose Company, 7716 Tyler Blvd., Mentor, Ohio 44060; 216/974-6730.

Bounce-Free Floors

According to its manufacturer, *IBS 2000 Engineered Bridging* significantly reduces deflection and vibration in sawn-lumber floor systems. Each unit consists of spruce crossmembers nailed and glued to plywood nailing flanges. In Canada, the building code allows contractors



using this system to space joists farther apart and span greater distances without switching to more expensive engineered lumber. IBS 2000 has recently been approved by ICB0 for the *Uniform Building Code*. The product is made for joist spacing of 12, 16, and 19.2 inches, and costs around \$5 per unit.

Contact: Western Interlok Systems Ltd., 24611 Fraser Hwy., Langley, BC V2Z 2L2, Canada; 604/857-9601. ■