

Products

by Pete Young

Lead Testing Swabs

If you have clients who are worried about lead, you'll probably want to convince them to pay a professional lead inspector to assess the job before you begin. But if that's not in the cards, *LeadCheck* swabs can give you a pretty good indication as to whether or not lead is present on painted surfaces, in pipe solder, or in dust created during a remodeling project. The swabs come preloaded with two chemicals that, when mixed, are lead-reactive. To use the swabs, mix the chemicals by squeezing two spots on the swab, then rub any suspect surfaces with the end of the swab. If the swab turns red, lead is present. A pair of swabs retails for \$7.50, while a package of 36 retails at \$32.

Contact: Homax Products, Inc., P.O. Box 5643, Bellingham, WA 98225; 800/729-9029; www.homaxproducts.com.



Fire Protection

One of these three fire-stop products will fit most job-site situations. The *CP 643 Firestop Collar* comes in sizes



that protect pipe penetrations from 1½ to 4 inches. The collar carries up to a 3-hour fire rating (depending on the rating of the pipe) and is installed with clips. Prices vary from \$12 to \$35, depending on size. *FireStop Putty* comes



in either a flattened pad or round sticks, and is also rated for up to 3 hours. The pads (\$180 for a box of 20) are for wrapping around the backs of electrical boxes, while the sticks (\$380 for a box of 12) can be used to stuff penetrations.

Contact: Hilti Inc., P.O. Box 21148, Tulsa, OK 74121; 800/879-8000; www.hilti.com.

Tamper-Resistant Receptacles

Designed for pediatric health care facilities, this receptacle provides extra protection wherever children's active fingers might expose them to electrical danger. The design features a sliding shutter that allows plugs to slide in easily, but makes it hard for kids to insert pins, clips, or other small objects into the contact slots. Rated at 20 amps, the device lists at \$25 and can be wired from either the side or the back.

Contact: Leviton Manufacturing Co., 59-25 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, NY 11362; 800/323-8920; www.leviton.com.



Dimmable Compact Fluorescents

Until now, standard compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) could not be safely dimmed without the risk of overheating and starting a fire. Recently, however, a new CFL hit the market — the 23-watt dimmable model in the *Earth Light* line (\$20). Matching the lumen output of a 90-watt incandescent bulb, the dimmable Earth Light can be adjusted with regular dimmer switches for light levels down to 10% of maximum. As a retrofit, these dimmable CFLs can be used in all existing incandescent applications and will provide 10,000 hours of light each.

Contact: Philips Lighting Company, P.O. Box 6800, Somerset, NJ 08875; 800/555-0050; www.lighting.philips.com/nam.



FlameSeal is available in caulking tubes and in bulk pails. It can be used to protect donut-shaped spaces up to three inches wide against fire, smoke, and fire-feeding drafts. With ratings up to 3 hours, FlameSeal is compatible with most types of plastic, including ABS, PVC, PP, PE, and PB piping systems. A 10-ounce cartridge retails for \$8.

Contact: OSI Sealants, Inc., 7405 Production Dr., Mentor, OH 44060; 800/321-3578; www.osisealants.com.



Innovative Vent

Heating and cooling vents are often located along the perimeter of a



room, where curtains and furniture can interfere with air flow. The two-position *Pop-Up Vent* offers a choice on where conditioned air is directed. Set flush, the vent directs air upwards and sideways; pulled up, the vent sends air outwards along the floor surface. Made of high impact polystyrene, the vent (\$7) is available in white and off-white colors.

Contact: Break Thru Products Inc., 2743 Nadina Dr., Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 6A6 Canada; 604/552-2706.

Decorative Flooring Strips

Here's a wood flooring detail that can be completely customized with either a decorative design or with a company name or logo. The border or medallion inlays can be either laser- or CNC-cut and start at \$150. Prices increase depending on the intricacy of the design and amount of flooring used. Eight-inch company *Signature Strips* cost \$22.50 each. Both decorative designs



and company logo pieces are cut onto stock that you provide to ensure that they match the floors you install.

Contact: Decorative Flooring; 895 Jamerson Rd., Suite B, Marietta, GA 30066; 888/928-8665; www.decorativeflooring.com.

Make-Up Air for Combustion Appliances

In tight houses, the water heater and furnace or boiler can backdraft when clothes dryers and exhaust fans create negative indoor air pressure. In these situations, providing make-up air is essential if heating fuel is to be safely burned. While some have turned to passive pressure-equalizing devices, these can fail on windy sites. One mechanical ventilation option is to install an air-intake unit such as the *In-Forcer*. Available in models with different capacities for both gas- and oil-fired systems, the In-Forcer interlocks electrically with the combustion appliances. Outside air is drawn in through a 3-inch PVC pipe and mixed with indoor air to moderate the temperature. The air is then funneled down to the area where the furnace, boiler, or water heater is located. When not in use, a damper prevents cold air from entering and causing unnecessary heat loss. Models suitable for residential homes list at between \$325 and \$385.



Contact: Tjernlund Products, Inc., 1601 Ninth St., White Bear Lake, MN 55110; 800/255-4208.

Hybrid Stringers

Combining engineered components mounted onto solid-sawn 2-by lumber, *EasyRiser Stringers* go together quickly and end up being stronger than traditional stringers cut out of 2x12 lumber. The EasyRiser system consists of triangular 2x6 riser/tread pieces sandwiched by OSB fins that slide over a 2x6 or 2x8 stringer and are fastened into position. Untreated (\$3.25 each) and treated (\$3.75 each) prod-



ucts are available for interior and exterior applications. Sold in boxes of 36 pieces, EasyRisers are code-approved by BOCA, ICBO, and SBCCI.

Contact: Building Components Manufacturing, Inc., P.O. Box 9328, Minneapolis, MN 55440; 800/475-9304; www.bcmi.com.

Tin Ceilings

Decorative Stamped Ceiling Panels are available as both lay-in and nail-up panels made of either tin-plated steel or chromium-treated (tin free) steel. The panels come in several Victorian and Art Deco styles along with matching cornices and traditional cone head nails. The 2x2-foot lay-in panels cost \$12 to \$14 each, while 2x4-foot nail-up panels go for between \$21 and \$26 each. All panels are shipped uncoated and must have a colored or clear protective finish applied on site.

Contact: Outwater Plastics Industries, Inc., 4 Passaic St., Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075; 800/631-8375; www.outwater.com.

