

Clampco Clips

April 2018



The Safety Corner

Summer is upon us, bringing with it the sounds of ocean waves, splashing in the pool and lawn mowers.

The noise mowers make isn't exactly pleasing to the ear. And those doing the mowing could actually be damaging their hearing. Most lawn care workers know that protecting the ears from that noisy mowing motor is an occupational necessity. But 15-year-old Ron McCaffrey isn't aware of that.

He mows neighborhood lawns for extra money and doesn't wear ear protection. "I do notice when I'm done, my ears are trying a little harder to hear," said McCaffrey.

"Gas-powered lawn mowers can be anywhere from 90 decibels to 106 decibels. Those levels are where we start being concerned about damage to your ears from the noise," said Meaghan Reed, an audiologist at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Even 85 decibels can do damage with prolonged exposure. That's at or near what the Occupational Safety and Health Administration considers a permissible level over an 8-hour day. With every increase of 5 decibels, cut those permissible hours in half. Using a decibel meter, McCaffrey's mower came in at 88.

"The general good rule of thumb is if you are standing arm distance from a person and have to shout to hear them, there's a possibility there could be hearing damage," said Reed.

Adding insult to injury, McCaffrey uses ear buds to listen to music while he's mowing. "When I'm not mowing the lawn I usually have my iPod at half volume. But when I am mowing the lawn, I'm two clicks away from full," said McCaffrey.

"That gives you more constant exposure to noise, two sources rather than one," said Reed.

She offers the following advice.

Wear protective ear gear or noise-cancelling head phones.

Limit continuous exposure if decibel levels are 85-90 or above.

Keep iPod levels low, no more than 60 percent of the max.

Even McCaffrey's father admits he pumps up the music while mowing. "I know my ears are gone because in the '70s I listened to too much Led Zeppelin. So there's no hope for me. But for them, if we can protect their ears, that's important," said Ted McCaffrey.

Electric mowers are supposed to be less noisy. But NewsCenter 5 measured the noise level on one, and it was about the same as the gas-powered mower.

<http://www.wcvb.com/article/dream-house-of-the-week-harry-houdini/19671497>

– **Matt Olszewski, Safety Director**

A Note from the desk of:

Dale Ptak, Quality Manager

As I thought about what to write for this newsletter, it probably isn't surprising that quality first came to mind. Being in this field of work for almost 40-years now (Ouch, that hurt to say), I guess quality has simply become part of who I am...it's in my DNA so to speak. I've worked for a number of manufacturing companies over the years, and in doing so, feel fortunate to have been exposed to a variety of different systems, processes, parts, and people. So, I thought I'd take this opportunity to talk about one of those components—people—and what quality responsibilities they (we) have as the lifeblood of an organization.

The other manufacturing companies I've worked for over my career have varied significantly in both size and product range; but, I haven't really found too much difference in the people doing the work. All of the workforces were diverse and had a mix of people with varying backgrounds, education, experience, and motivation. I've discovered that some people come to work because they're passionate about it and absolutely love what they do, many more because they've found something they're good at and feel they can contribute and make a decent living, and others still who...well...need to pay the bills somehow, right? But regardless of their motivation, it's been my experience that most people genuinely want to do a good job—and I know this to be especially true here at Clampco, because I see your efforts and the results of your efforts every day.

One of Clampco's primary company objectives is external PPM (Parts Per Million), which is a widely accepted measure of a company's quality performance to their Customers. For those who may be interested, it's calculated by taking the total number of defective parts reported by our Customers each month, dividing that number by the total quantity of parts shipped in that month, and then multiplying that value by 1,000,000. Clampco's overall average-monthly value in 2017 was just **8-PPM**, which is truly outstanding! It shows that we do a fantastic job overall of providing our Customers with a quality product, so my sincere thanks go out to all of you! But, that doesn't mean we can't improve; in fact, as we continue to grow and move into more demanding markets, our continued success will absolutely be dependent on our ability to improve.

That said, I know there are many things are out of your hands. Things such as proper and well-maintained equipment, tools, raw materials, adequate training, robust processes, and clear work instructions—to name just a few—are Management's responsibility; and therefore, the Management Team has an obligation to give you everything you need to succeed. However, as our last line of defense against non-conforming product, you too have some responsibilities; and of those responsibilities, none are more important than following your procedures & work instructions. After almost four decades as a Quality professional, if I were to pick the one thing that has caused more scrap & rework in the companies I've worked for than anything else, that one thing would be *not following procedure*—and there wouldn't even be a close second. So, as we continue to grow and improve, there are some simple things I'll ask of you: 1. Please continue to be diligent, attentive, and focused on the task at hand...dot every "i" and cross every "t". 2. Follow your work instructions, work orders, part drawings, and procedures...all the time, every day. 3. If something doesn't make sense and/or you're not sure what to do, stop and ask your Supervisor or Manager for guidance...please don't just guess.

Everyone's intentions are good and no one sets out to make a defective part or a bad decision on purpose. I believe this to be true because I know what a great group of folks you are; but, as the famous poet T.S. Elliot once wrote, "*Most of the evil in this world is done by people with good intentions.*" Now, I won't go as far as to say that defective parts are evil, but you get the gist of the idea. We have procedures, policies, drawings, and work instructions to help you, not hinder you. Please be diligent about using/following them, as your willingness to do so will help carry Clampco into an exciting and very bright & prosperous future...Thank You!