

Portable circular saw is handy tool

(AP) — For most household jobs that require a quick straight cut, a portable circular saw is a good alternative to a cumbersome table saw.

A portable circular saw consists of a motor that drives a disc-shaped blade. The motor is enclosed in a case with handles, and blade guards. Locking devices help to make the saw safe, provided that they are always used.

The size of a circular saw is determined by the diameter of the blade. The 7 1/4-inch models are by far the most popular and practical. Generally, a three-horsepower (or 11-cubic-inch) motor drives a 7 1/4-inch blade efficiently for most jobs. Weight also helps a saw cut smoother, but make sure a model is not so heavy that it is fatiguing and

hard to control. Two kinds of circular saw blades work for most jobs, a general-purpose combination blade with 24 to 26 teeth and a fine-cutting blade with about 40 teeth. As a rule, it's best to use a fine-cutting blade. They stay sharper longer, but they're expensive and more brittle and can be damaged if improperly handled.

If you plan to cut metal, use a special metal-cutting blade — and leave yourself for a shower of sparks. To ensure safety, wear eye-protection goggles or a full face. When using metal-cutting blades, work for safety — say 10 feet — from saw likely to catch fire. When sawing metal use a metal blade guard, plastic miter, and a hair dryer, then rub a block of paraffin wax on the underside of the saw's baseplate. Maintain a firm footing and never reach too far with the saw. Stand to the side so you're not in

the way if the saw does kick back. Keep a firm grip on the saw. Start the saw before the blade touches the work. Release the trigger immediately if the saw starts to bind. At the end of the cut, hold the saw firmly to the blade to stop before removing it from the work.

Here's an easy way to measure and set your circular saw's cutting depth without having to pull out a measuring tape every time. Mark one-half-inch, three-fourths-inch and 1 1/2-inch blade depth measurements on the saw's blade guard with a fine-point permanent marker. Then line up the bottom of the saw's baseplate with the appropriate mark.

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sure the blade is sharp and clean. Clamp the work to a firm surface. Don't saw wet wood. Be especially careful when sawing warped or knotty wood. A portable circular saw cuts upward. The teeth of the blade often splinter the wood as they emerge. For a neat cut, mark cutting lines on the back of a piece and clamp the piece flat down. To make more accurate cuts with a circular saw, mark the cutting line on the front of the saw's base plate with paint or an indelible felt marker. Want your saw to glide as it cuts? Heat the surface slightly with a hair dryer, then rub a block of paraffin wax on the underside of the saw's baseplate. Maintain a firm footing and never reach too far with the saw. Stand to the side so you're not in

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HELPING HAND: John Chaffari extends Friendly Serve at his Oakland County-based Mobil station.

Mobil revives 'Friendly Serve'

By DEAN PERLA
Special Writer

They greet you at the gasoline pumps with a smile — standing easily to assist you with washing, oil and tire checks, and completing your transaction. So if you thought gasoline service attendants were a thing of the past, you haven't been to one of 200 participating Mobil stations in Metro Detroit, including Oakland County, that now offer "Friendly Serve."

Mobil Oil Corp.'s new program was first marketed in Florida and California before making the debut in the Detroit area on June 10. It was fashioned around responses compiled from an extensive, nationwide consumer survey.

"They found that customers are looking for speed, service and a smile — people to greet them and talk to them," said John Chaffari, owner of West Bloomfield's Mobil station. A franchise owner who implemented the program at all three of his Oakland County Mobil locations, Chaffari is finding that customers really do appreciate the faster, friendlier, customer service offered at no extra charge at both the full-service and self-service islands.

Birmingham resident John Regan recently pulled into the self-serve island at Chaffari's

Mobil station at Hunter Blvd. and Oak Street in Birmingham and began filling his tank. When Chaffari offered to wash Regan's car windows, Regan "was totally surprised."

Though he used to visit the Hunter Blvd. location only twice a month, Regan now plans to stop in more frequently.

"I think it's an excellent marketing tool for the station," said Regan, a marketing consultant. "This station is well located, very clean and very well lit. This will be a surprise to a lot of people just like I was to me."

Friendly Serve attendants are trained on product knowledge, station routines and the latest pump technology at Mobil's training facility. They also must become knowledgeable of the area, so they can give directions to those who need them.

But training doesn't stop there for Chaffari's attendants. "I work with the employees to motivate them to assist the customer," said Chaffari, who spends 45 minutes a day at each of his locations leading by example. "As with all major oil companies, we know for a fact that we sell a good quality product. The way to differentiate ourselves is through our service."

Chaffari has one Friendly Serve attendant available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, at each of his approach-

up locations. Through radio communication with the clerk inside the convenience store, attendants can order up for customers at the time of payment. They may also look in on young children while parents complete a purchase.

"The perception of people today is that everybody is in a rush and a hurry," explains Chaffari, who has been in the business for six years. "They don't want to spend 10 to 15 minutes in a service station. They want to fill up their cars and take off."

Though it's too early to notice an increase in sales, Chaffari said, "that's what I am seeing in more fuel traffic."

Chaffari serves 1,200 customers a day at the Birmingham location. His other Mobil stations are at Telegraph and Long Lake Road in Bloomfield Hills, and at Auburn Road and Livernois in Rochester Hills. Chaffari must absorb the cost for the attendant, a setup that will pay for itself with increased sales.

"In business, we're always looking for new opportunities, and we look at Friendly Serve as a great opportunity for us right now," he noted. "It's here to stay, as long as the customers are rewarding us with their business."

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BUSINESS MARKETPLACE

Hills has been awarded the KFC Big Apple Ad Group account, an advertising cooperative consisting of 200 Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants in the New York City area. Bud Krause, KFC's president and 20-year Detroit advertising veteran, will handle the \$5 million account from the company's Bloomfield Hills office, 1677 N. Woodward Ave., Suite 210. **FROM BIRMINGHAM:** The R. F. Lewis Co., one of the country's largest providers of business furnishings, has changed its name to Facility

Matrix Group. After merging with Bloomfield Hills-based Office Pavilion in 1994, the Flint-based R. F. Lewis Co. began a phase-in process with the official name change effective June 1. Office Pavilion began using the new name at the time of the merger. Facility Matrix Group specializes in office furnishings, space planning, project management and interior design. It also offers relocation management and a variety of office systems from custom-built cabinetry, floor

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