



Home Depot Selects MSA Safety Works as 1999 `Partner of the Year'

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PITTSBURGH, Feb. 18 /PRNewswire/ -- MSA (Amex: MSA), the world's leading manufacturer of safety equipment, announced today that its MSA Safety Works consumer product group has been chosen as Home Depot's "Partner of the Year" for the hardware and tools product category. Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer, bestows the award annually to partners in six major product categories.

"MSA Safety Works competed for the award with top-notch hardware suppliers that literally have hundreds of years of retail experience and are household names," said John T. Ryan III, MSA chairman and chief executive officer. "To receive this award in only our first full year of business in the highly competitive consumer market speaks volumes about the commitment and dedication of our associates. We equate this achievement to winning both a `Rookie of the Year' and `MVP' award in the same season."

Applying the safety expertise it gained in the industrial market over the past 85 years, MSA entered the rapidly growing consumer safety products category in 1998. The Home Depot began carrying the MSA Safety Works line in late 1998. The products are now available at more than 200 of their U.S. and Canadian stores.

The Partner of the Year award is given to the Home Depot vendor that provides the most consistent high level of service. Home Depot officials also have complimented MSA Safety Works' products, consumer marketing and merchandising programs, and outstanding delivery record.

"Our products have set a new standard of excellence in the category," said John Shields, National Sales Manager for MSA Safety Works. "Our customer service and innovative merchandising will continue to drive sales."

MSA Safety Works products are categorized by protection area -- respiratory, eye, hearing, head, body and first aid -- to simplify selection for consumers and contractors. The packaging is reclosable for convenient product storage, and color-coded by category to speed selection. MSA Safety Works also offers creative retail merchandising tools that educate consumers while guiding them quickly to the products they need.

MSA is the world's leading supplier of quality products and services that protect people's health, safety, and the environment. In addition to home improvement retailing, key markets for MSA include general industry, the fire service, hazardous materials handling, construction and the nuclear industry. The company, established in 1914, has manufacturing operations throughout the United States and 28 international affiliates.

SOURCE Mine Safety Appliances Company

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