

Are We Still in Kansas?

Steve Thomas just told all the good and honest readers of *JLC* where he keeps the spare key to his truck ("Duct Tape for Dummies," *Letters*, 8/04). By including his first and last name and city and state, you could have just helped get his truck stolen!

After a quick search on the Internet, I found two possible Steve Thomases. Now someone would just have to drive by and see which one has a pickup parked in front and check the tailgate for a key.

Don't worry: I just called Steve's home and let him know that he should move his key!

J. Mann
Somewhere in Texas

Steve Thomas responds: So I get this phone call from a guy in Texas — a guy in the insurance business — who seemed alarmed about my disclosure as to where I keep a spare key for my truck. I thanked him, told him I appreciated his concern, and reassured him that I'd moved the key. I too did some homework on the Internet and found out where he lives — a nice little town between Paranoia and Way-Too-Much-Time-On-Your-Hands, Texas.

My intent was to suggest a safe spot to tuck a key away should you be locked out (as stated, I do this with surprising frequency), not to get my truck targeted for theft. Meanwhile, I remain comfortable with my disclosure — I'd like to hope not too many felons subscribe to this magazine.

Compressor Specs

I found Victor Rasilla's article on stacked-tank compressors (8/04) highly informative. The only quibble I have is that some of the manufacturers' stated specs may not be true in real life. My Porter-Cable CPLDC2540S reportedly draws only 12 amps, which was the lowest current draw among the review subjects. On the job, however, it routinely trips 15-amp breakers on startup, generally when it's recovering after the initial tank charge. Sometimes I even have to run the compressor off the inverter in my truck when I can't access a 20-amp receptacle.

Jonathan Ward
Durham, N.C.

Long Spans and Tile

Regarding the item "Setting Ceramic Tile Over Long-Span Steel Joists" (Q&A, 8/04), L/360 isn't typically a good indicator of a firm floor except for spans under 15 feet. L/480 is optimum for spans up to 20 feet, which equals 1/2-inch deflection at full load. For the 24-foot span in the contractor's question, deflection of 1/2 inch would equal L/576. The Wood Truss Council recommends that to avoid cracking of tile floors, deflections should be less than 1/4 inch at full load, which in this case would be a floor design of L/1,152. For a marble floor, the deflection would be even less, something closer to 1/8 inch.

Robert Riggs
TrimJoist Representative
Lexington, Ky.

Doubling Compressed Air Output

Your recent article on compressors ("Stacked-Tank Compressors," 8/04) brought to mind something I learned on the job site many years ago, while nailing off sheathing. I discovered that we could double our compressor output simply by doubling our compressors — literally. By using a double dangle — a fitting with two male ends, which costs a couple of bucks — we simply connect two compressors, using the second output nozzle to feed the nail gun. No adjustments are necessary: You just plug them together and go. If your compressor has only one output, just add a T-fitting.

With two pancakes working in tandem, I can nail off sheathing without having to stop and wait for the compressor to catch up. Ganged compressors are also handy when I run air-hungry tools like a metal nibbler or an air ratchet.

I've found that two small compressors can typically run on one 20-amp circuit, as long as their cut-in settings are a bit different. Two compressors kicking in at the same time can trip the breaker. Plugging them into sepa-



rate circuits is also an option. I suppose there's no limit to the number of portable compressors you could daisy-chain, as long as you've got the circuitry to handle them.

Carl Hagstrom
Montrose, Pa.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

Letters must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *JLC*, 186 Allen Brook Lane, Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com.