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# Getting in Line

by Rodger Pickett

**F**OR A LONG TIME, the mantra in our business has been, "Insurance companies pay so little it compromises safety." Without arguing the right or wrong of that position, I will state unequivocally that no matter what we are paid, we must never compromise customer safety.

Recognizing that everyone's situation is different, here is a personal story, the point of which should have broad applicability, even if the exact circumstances do not.

Six years ago, when a certain two-part adhesive we were using proved to be extremely unreliable, our company decided we would simply no longer offer mobile service in temperatures less than 40° Fahrenheit. While liability issues played a role in the decision, I believe a genuine concern for the safety of our customers was at its root.

## Why Safety is First

Nevertheless, with considerable consternation, we arrived at that critical juncture. The potential of losing significant business to the competition, which would continue unsafe mobile installations, haunted us. However, our commitment to safety assuaged our fears and the policy was implemented.

Somewhat to our surprise, we found that customers were willing to PAY for safety! Did we receive greater remuneration from insurance companies? No. But our customers were, almost without exception, willing to commit the time and effort into arranging to have the replacement performed in one of our shops,

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where the climate was controlled (and the margins were higher) for their own safety.

Furthermore, customers were thankful we had shared the safety concerns with them and found it endearing we had done so. They educated others.

We experienced an extremely profitable winter. But that's not all. Today there are several reliable products that allow for satisfactory sub-40° Fahrenheit curing. However, we still don't provide mobile service in sub-40° Fahrenheit temperatures. Why not?

Well, there are a myriad of reasons why cold temperature installations are not a good idea, but here's the one that's most important to us. Our installers are so happy not to have to deal with inclement weather that they stay with us even when competitors offer more money.

Lower turnover has made us more profitable. Loyal customers, contented installers, increased profits—all from one scary decision based on a commitment to safety. It's like a dream—but it's true.

The point is that decisions based on an absolute commitment to the safety of your customers will ALWAYS be good ones. You may have to become creative in other areas and


find solutions to new challenges, but you will always be better off for having chosen the safety of your customers and employees over anything else. What goes around DOES come around. Extending safety to your customers will bring security back to you.

## The Standard

Having said that, for the last four years I've worked with other installers, manufacturers, associations and interested parties to produce an auto glass replacement safety standard (AGRSS) for the benefit of our industry and for everyone who cares about their customers.

The standard is complete. It will never be finished. It is a living thing that will change as the industry does. Your interest in complying with such a standard will bolster your own commitment to safety and signal to your customers that you care.

Take a look at the standard by visiting [www.agrss.com](http://www.agrss.com), bring your company into compliance and get registered (see *the form on page 36*). Your commitment to safety will be rewarded—guaranteed. ■

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