

## GUIDANCE NOTE

Ref: WPA TW 16

Issue 1: February 2024

# Storing and handling preservative treated timber

## Information for suppliers and end users

Image: Södra

Preservative treated timber has been employed successfully as a construction material for many years - both in the commercial and DIY sectors. Wood preservatives used in industrial treatment plants are highly regulated to ensure they are safe and effective. There are legal compliance obligations for both companies manufacturing wood preservatives and those applying them to treat timber.

Equally, suppliers and end users have a duty of care to store, handle and use treated timber as advised by the supplier of the treated wood.

This publication sets out generic guidance. Product information from individual preservative treatment manufacturers should also be consulted.

### Guidance for treated timber suppliers

All wood preservative manufacturers provide information concerning the use of their products.

- It is essential that the supplier of treated timber products shares relevant information with its customers. This should be freely available either on labels, company website, at point of sale, in hard copy or digital format, on invoices, delivery notes or receipts.

**NOTE: Safety data sheets (SDS) for wood preservatives** are only relevant to timber treatment companies and not for those buying or using the finished treated timber component.

A typical pack label (TANALITH)



When treated timber is first placed on the market, it is a legal requirement for it to be clearly labelled with specific information. This includes listing any biocidal product used in the treatment - its active substances and any incorporated nanomaterials - plus relevant instructions for the timber's use, including any precautions to be taken.

As the timber moves through the supply chain, the pack label may become damaged or detached, particularly when the material isn't sold as a single item but broken down into smaller parts.

Therefore, reliance cannot be placed on the pack label reaching the end user. For this reason, WPA and TDUK recommend that sales documentation should identify the products which have been preservative treated, and where specific user guidance can be obtained if it does not accompany every delivery.

### Receiving and storing treated timber - CHECKLIST

- After treatment, wood must be held at the treatment site before despatch, until surfaces are dry
- Upon moving to point of sale, treated timber should be stored clear of the ground and protected from rainfall



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Image: Mikael Blomkvist (Pexels)

### Guidance for users of treated timber

Only buy treated timber from a **reputable supplier** – who can provide evidence of its **source**, preferably third-party accredited. **Follow the user guidance supplied with the timber. IF NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT POINT OF SALE - ASK FOR IT.**

**NOTE: Safety data sheets (SDS) refer to the wood preservative** – often a concentrated form that is diluted with water before treating timber – and are therefore of relevance **only to those treating the wood**.

### Generic handling advice

When handling treated wood, most precautions are generally the same as handling untreated wood:

- Wear gloves when handling or working with wood
- Wear a dust mask and goggles when machining, cutting or sanding wood
- Take care when lifting and moving timber – use appropriate manual handling techniques
- Wash hands after working with wood, before eating, smoking and bathroom visits
- Launder heavily soiled clothes separately

### Generic advice for using treated timber

- Do not use in direct contact with foodstuff or where it may become a component of food (animal feed or beehives)
- Do not use where it may come into contact with drinking water
- Avoid cross cutting treated components. Apply brush-on end grain wood preservative as recommended by the manufacturer, to any exposed surfaces to maintain integrity

### Re-use and disposal of treated timber

Any waste or redundant treated timber from commercial or industrial use (e.g. construction sites) should be, if possible, recycled by re-use or disposed of at an authorised landfill or controlled and approved waste incinerator. Most wood treated with modern-day preservatives is classified as non-hazardous. Consult WPA [Guidance Note TW14](#) for further details.

- Do not use for mulch or compost
- Do not burn
- Do not use for fuel in cooking stoves, grates or BBQs
- Do not use for animal litter or bedding

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For further information or advice, please contact either :

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