

GUIDANCE NOTE

Ref: WPA TW 7

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This document is a summary of the WPA Benchmark Quality Approval Scheme for preservative pre-treated wood. For details please refer to the full Scheme Document - available on request from WPA.

Refer to table overleaf for costs associated with WPA Benchmark certification



WPA Benchmark Scheme for Preservative Treated Wood Executive Summary

Introduction

The **WPA Benchmark Approval Scheme** provides quality assurance for wood which has been preservative pre-treated by an industrial process. It was introduced in 2011 to build buyer confidence in good quality, fit for purpose treated wood products. Independent accreditation of wood treatment operations is now a requirement for **Timber Trade Federation (TTF)** members (*TTF Wood Treatment action plan - point 3*).

Principles on which the Scheme is based

Whilst **BS8417 – the Code of Practice for the Preservation of Wood** – recommends the levels of preservative penetration and retention, it points to the **WPA Code of Practice: Industrial Wood Preservation** to provide guidance on how this is achieved in practice. The WPA Benchmark scheme therefore audits operational procedures against the requirements of the WPA Code of Practice.

DEFINITIONS



Approved Treaters are those companies operating a treatment plant or plants that have been subject to audit and shown to have robust quality management systems in place which demonstrate that they are capable of producing correctly treated material in accordance with the WPA Code of Practice under the terms of the WPA Benchmark scheme.



Approved Products are those lines for which the production process has been subject to audit and for which the penetration and retention of preservative required in the WPA Code of Practice has also been assured by direct testing or by safe relationship testing. The scope of products approved will be recorded on a company's WPA Benchmark accreditation certificate and should be clearly stated in/on company marketing materials.

Route to Compliance APPROVED TREATER

The audit process will focus on establishing that an effective quality management system is in place which meets the criteria clearly set out in **WPA Quality Guidance Note QGN2**. Particular emphasis will be placed on the accurate specification of treated products and description/labelling of goods (*TTF action plan - point 1*), along with the provision of adequate customer/end user information and training, where appropriate, on the safe and effective use of treated products (*TTF action plan - point 2*).

At each audit, the evidence required includes site specific, documented –

Treatment process operating systems record keeping and data management

Training and competence records

Calibration, maintenance and preservative analysis records

Management procedures, including handling non-compliant material

Subject to an **initial, successful on-site verification audit**, the WPA would carry out an **annual surveillance audit** to check that all was still valid for a particular treater's operation. Treaters who have sufficient documentary evidence (*which may include visual images/video*) to verify that they are able to comply with the scheme criteria without a WPA auditor actually having to visit site on every occasion may qualify for a periodic **remote, desk top audit**.

The criteria for assessment of the treater's performance under either route to compliance are the same. However, if there is insufficient evidence submitted to facilitate a remote audit, then a site visit will still be necessary.

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Route to Compliance APPROVED PRODUCT

Approved Product accreditation can only be granted to a company already holding **Approved Treater** status.

However, the company being audited must also be able to demonstrate that a consistent relationship exists – known as a **Safe Relationship** – between the penetration and retention requirements and the more easily measurable parameters of the treatment process.

For a treated product to be approved, sample analysis data must be presented to demonstrate that the penetration and retention requirements for that product have been achieved in a statistically significant number of samples (BS EN 351-2:2007 Table A.2).

TTF Scheme Compliance Timetable: Audit Category Required

PRODUCT CATEGORY	SUMMER 2022	2nd ANNUAL AUDIT	BEYOND YEAR 2
Use Classes 1 & 2	Approved Treater Audit	Approved Treater Audit	Approved Treater Audit
Use Class 3	Approved Treater Audit	Approved Product Audit	Approved Product Audit
Use Class 4	Approved Product Audit	Approved Product Audit	Approved Product Audit

NOTE: Companies may apply for Approved Product audit before the deadlines stated, but this is not mandatory.

WPA Benchmark Certification Costs

The base fee structure payable each year for treaters operating within mainland UK is set out below.

	Non-Member	TTF Member	WPA Member
Scheme Membership: treater joining fee	£1,760	£630	0
Initial verification audit fee	£2,200	£1,400	£1,100
Annual surveillance audit fee	£2,100	£1,350	£1,050

NOTES:

- Auditor expenses (*at cost*) are in addition to the audit fees.
- Surveillance audits may be conducted on-site or remote desktop, depending on individual circumstances. A 20% reduction in fees will apply to desktop audits.
- Where there are multiple treatment processes (*eg high and low pressure*) on the same site, a 20% audit fee reduction will apply to all processes.
- Verification audit fees apply to each site and/or process to be certified. Surveillance audits may not be required at all sites for multi-site operators, depending on audit performance.
- Certification costs are for WPA Benchmark members located on the UK mainland. Separate arrangements are in place for overseas members.
- All fees are subject to VAT at the prevailing rate.

For further information or advice, please contact either :

The Wood Protection Association | www.thewpa.org.uk | Tel: 01977 558 274 | Email: contact@thewpa.org.uk

The Timber Trade Federation | www.ttf.co.uk | Tel: 020 3205 0067 | Email: ttf@ttf.co.uk