



GUIDANCE NOTE

Ref: WPA FR 10

Issue 2: July 2022

Assuring Quality

The Flame Retardant Treated Wood Supply Chain

Where a flame retardant (FR) is added in the factory during the manufacturing process for MDF, OSB or plywood then that manufacturing process should be subject to factory production control (*accredited by an **approved** body in the UK or a **notified** body in the EU*). The product should carry the **UKCA** (UK) or **CE** (EU) mark and be accompanied by a valid **Declaration of Performance (DoP)** when it leaves the factory.

Where the product is factory FR treated after manufacture (*solid wood, some plywood*) by a service treater, that company must also operate factory production controls which have been accredited by a notified body, alongside those of the company placing the product on the market, so as to maintain full traceability.

Independent Assurance of Quality

The Wood Protection Association administer industry recognised quality schemes providing valid independent assessment and verification to further assure products and processes are fit for purpose. The recently updated WPA Benchmark Quality Approval Schemes cover: flame retardants, preservative treatments and modified wood.

For flame retardants (FR), there are three interlocking schemes which cover every stage in the production and distribution of FR treated wood-based materials. In each, assessments and audits are conducted by independent experts.



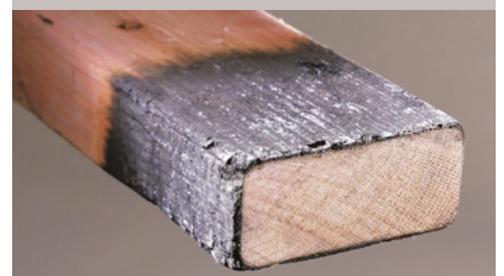
1. WPA Benchmark Approval Scheme for Formulations (FR)

This Scheme provides independent verification of the efficacy of flame retardant formulations applied or added to wood-based materials by a factory controlled process monitored under a recognised quality assurance scheme.

The data to be supplied in support of an application is clearly defined in a Scheme Document and is submitted to the WPA for assessment by an independent Efficacy Panel.

The assessment includes:

- examination of fire test certificates and classification reports and;
- looking at other characteristics that affect performance in service such as wood strength and smoke emission.



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2. WPA Benchmark Approval Scheme for Treatment Processes (FR)

This Scheme is for wood-based materials whose reaction to fire classification has been enhanced by a flame retardant treatment process in factory controlled conditions or by the incorporation of flame retardant chemicals as part of the manufacturing process.

- Processes certificated under this scheme must use a [WPA Benchmark Approved Formulation \(FR\)](#)
- The Scheme provides independent third-party auditing and verification that a [WPA Benchmark Approved Formulation \(FR\)](#) has been correctly applied.



3. WPA Benchmark Approval Scheme for Distributors (FR)

The Scheme is for companies supplying and distributing flame retardant treated wood products which have been treated by a third party accredited under the [WPA Benchmark Approved Treater \(FR\)](#) scheme and using a [WPA Benchmark Approved Formulation \(FR\)](#).

The Scheme provides independent third-party verification that such distributors can trace their products back through the supply chain to verifiable fire test classification reports.



“Traceability and communication are the keys to ensuring compliance”.

*Dame Judith Hackitt,
author of the Independent
Review of Building
Regulations and Fire Safety.*

In Summary

A wood based product which is:

- treated with a formulation listed under the [WPA Benchmark Approved Formulation \(FR\)](#) Scheme,
- which is applied under a [WPA Benchmark Approved Treater \(FR\)](#) Scheme and
- distributed via a [WPA Benchmark Approved Distributor \(FR\)](#)

will provide the specified end product performance, meet supply chain expectations and comply with regulatory requirements.

Details of companies who hold WPA Benchmark FR accreditations can be found on the website: www.thewpa.org.uk