

Storing and handling preservative treated wood

Guidance for suppliers and end users

Image: Södra

Preservative treated wood 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 companies manufacturing wood preservatives and those applying them to treat wood.

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

This publication sets out generic guidance. Product specific information from individual wood preservative manufacturers and treated wood suppliers should also be consulted.

Guidance for treated wood suppliers

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

- It is essential that the supplier of treated wood products shares relevant information with its customers. This should be freely available either on labels, company website, at point of sale, on invoices, delivery notes or receipts.
- Freshly treated wood must be held at the treatment site until the surfaces are deemed dry before despatch.

When treated wood is first placed on the market, it is a legal requirement for it to be clearly labelled with specific information according to GB Biocidal Products Regulation (England, Scotland, Wales) and EU Biocidal Products Regulation (Northern Ireland). This includes listing any biocidal product used in the treatment, the biocidal property attributed to the wood if any, its active substances and any incorporated nanomaterials, plus relevant instructions for the wood's use including any precautions to be taken.

As the wood 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 recommends 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.



GUIDANCE NOTE

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Guidance for users of treated wood

Only buy treated wood from a reputable supplier who can provide evidence of its source, preferably third-party accredited.

As with all construction materials, users of treated wood should follow the installation and safe handling instructions of the manufacturer. These are available from the seller of the treated wood. If they are not available at the point of sale or do not accompany a delivery – **PLEASE ASK FOR THEM.**

The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) refers to the wood preservative – often a concentrated form that is diluted with water before treating wood – and is therefore of relevance only to those treating the wood and not users and suppliers of the treated wood product.

Generic handling advice

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

- Wear gloves when handling or working with any construction material.
- Wear a dust mask and goggles when machining, cutting or sanding wood.
- Take care when lifting and moving wood – 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 wood

- 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 or freshwater ponds or lakes.
- Avoid cross cutting treated components. Apply brush-on end grain wood preservative, as recommended by the manufacturer, to any exposed surfaces to maintain preservative integrity.

Re-use and disposal of treated wood

Wood waste is categorised into 4 grades from A to D. Re-use and disposal options depend on which grade the waste falls into. Most wood treated with modern preservatives is classified as non-hazardous Grade C and can be re-used in panel board manufacture or used in IED Chapter IV biomass installations.

Consult WPA [Guidance Note TW14](#) 'Treated Wood Waste' for further details.

DO NOT

- chip and use for mulch or compost.
- burn on open fires.
- use for fuel in stoves or BBQs.
- process for use as animal litter or bedding.

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For further information or advice, please contact:

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