

APVMA Decision on CCA Treated Timber



On 15 March 2005 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) released the report on its review of arsenic timber treatment products (CCA and Arsenic Trioxide). The decisions detailed in this report will lead to changes in the use of copper chrome arsenate (CCA) as a timber preservative. The key implications of the decision are summarized below. For more detailed information refer to www.apvma.gov.au and www.tpa.com.au.

Limitation on the use of CCA

- From 31 March 2006 CCA must not be used to treat timber products intended for use as garden furniture, picnic tables, exterior seating, children's play equipment, patio and domestic decking and hand rails.
- CCA can continue to be used to treat timber products intended for all other uses including structural timbers, telegraph poles, fence posts, fence palings and retaining structures.
- Each piece of CCA treated timber must be labelled as having being treated with CCA (except in specific circumstances where supplied and therefore marked as a pack).
- All timber treatment facilities that use CCA will be required to be designed and operated to meet the appropriate Australian Standards (AS/NZS 2843.1:2000 and AS/NZS 2843.2:2000).

Existing Structures

- The APVMA made no recommendation about existing structures made from CCA treated timber. However, the APVMA did state that
 - *“However, based on a consideration of the exposure to CCA-treatment timber products, in particular children's play equipment, there was no compelling evidence from the available data to conclude that there was likely to be an unacceptable risk to public health from exposure to arsenic from CCA-treated timber. Based on this finding, there would not seem to be any good justification for taking immediate action to remove existing CCA-treated playground structures.” and*
 - *“no other countries that have examined this issue ... are recommending the dismantling of existing structures”.*

Alternatives

- Treated timber alternatives to CCA include ACO and Copper Azole. Whilst these alternatives are more expensive than CCA they offer a solution for H3 level treatment of products from our renewable plantation timber resource. They may appear similar in appearance to CCA but will carry different labelling.

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The specific regulatory outcomes in the APVMA report relating to CCA are as follows:

- Product labels be varied to require that timber treatment facilities be designed and operated to meet appropriate Australian Standards (AS/NZS 2843.1:2000 and AS/NZS 2843.2:2000).
- Product labels be varied such that uses of CCA timber treatment products are not permitted for timber intended for use as garden furniture, picnic tables, exterior seating, children's play equipment, patio and domestic decking and handrails.
- Product labels be varied to specify the permitted uses for CCA products.
- Product labels be varied to require that each piece of timber be clearly identified as having been treated with CCA (except specific circumstances where supplied and therefore marked as a pack).
- Product labels be varied to include more detailed instructions for application, mixing and vacuum/pressure operations, management of freshly treated timber, management of liquids, sludge or waste material containing CCA residues, protection of wildlife, fish, crustaceans and the environment, and storage and disposal.
- CCA timber treatment products be declared restricted chemical products (RCP) in the public interest. Supply and use will be restricted to persons with special skills and knowledge achieved through authorised training. It will also be an RCP requirement that supply be restricted to treatment plants that comply with the specified Australian/New Zealand Standards.
- Registrants be required to submit specific worker exposure data to address concerns associated with arsenic and chromium (VI).