

CCA-Pressure Treated Wood

Chromated Copper Arsenate

Guidance for Outdoor Wooden Structures

Decks • Playgrounds • Picnic Tables

What You Should Know



What is CCA-treated wood?

If your residential wood structure was built before 2004 and is not made of cedar or redwood, it was most likely constructed with wood pressure-treated with Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA). CCA is a chemical preservative comprised of arsenic, chromium, and copper. First produced decades ago, it was a major source of treated-wood for decks, playgrounds, and other outdoor residential structures until 2004.

CCA, like other pesticides, is registered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2001, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the EPA received several petitions to ban CCA use in playground equipment because of potential human health concerns about exposure to chemical residues from contact with the wood and surrounding soil. Exposure concerns centered around arsenic, an element that can increase the risk of certain types of cancers.

Manufacturers submitted requests to EPA to voluntarily cancel *most* residential uses effective December 31, 2003. Although a ban on CCA-treated wood was never imposed, the voluntary cancellations prohibited CCA treatment on wood intended for outdoor residential structures such as decks and playgrounds.

The voluntary cancellations did not address the potential exposure to chemical residues from existing CCA-wood structures, nor does the EPA require the removal of structures made with CCA-treated wood. Wood treated with CCA is still available primarily for industrial use, and CCA is also still registered with EPA for the treatment of wood products that may be found in residential settings (shakes, shingles, and structural members other than decks) as well as products found in agricultural/commercial settings (posts or sawn timbers for fence posts or structural supports).

INCIDENTS: IF YOU THINK YOU ARE SUFFERING POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM WORKING WITH CCA-TREATED WOOD, IMMEDIATELY CONTACT YOUR MEDICAL PROVIDER.

Determining whether your residential structure is made with CCA-treated wood:

- » You may be able to find an end tag (see figure below) or other label/stamp on the underside or end of the wood that identifies the preservative type.
- » If new wood does not have an end tag identifying the preservative, ask your retailer.
- » Ask the builder.
- » Contact your local or state health department for more information on testing your deck for arsenic.

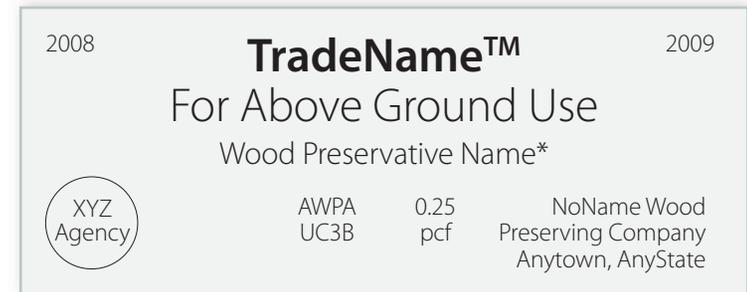


Figure: End Tag. Preservative indicated at *. Specifics about End Tags and wood treatments can be found on Web resource listings 7 and 10 on the reverse page.

Leaching/Disposal

- » Studies show that chemical residues can leach from CCA-treated wood. The amount and rate of leaching varies and is dependent on factors such as climate, rain/soil acidity, and wood age.
- » Discarded CCA lumber can usually be disposed of in construction and demolition landfills, municipal solid waste landfills, or industrial nonhazardous waste landfills; however, state or local laws may be more stringent. Be sure to contact your state or local authorities for information on disposal of CCA-treated wood.
- » Do not burn CCA or other preservative-treated wood to avoid possible inhalation of toxic chemicals in the smoke and ash.

Use/handling precautions:

Once identified, take precautions to minimize exposure to chemical residues and follow these guidelines:

- » Work outdoors and wear protection (e.g., goggles, gloves, and dust mask) when sawing, cleaning, or handling CCA-treated wood.
- » Thoroughly wash hands and all exposed body parts with soap and water after handling or playing on CCA-treated products.
- » Launder clothing worn when handling CCA-treated wood separately.
- » Children should not eat while on CCA-treated playgrounds as arsenic may be transferred to the mouth.
- » Do not allow children or pets to play in soil or other material under or near CCA-treated decks or structures.
- » CCA-treated wood should not be used where routine contact with food or animal feed can occur, including areas used to plant vegetables, fruits, herbs, etc. If you have a garden vegetable planter constructed with CCA-treated wood, install a plastic liner before filling the planter with soil to reduce exposure to CCA.
- » Do not use CCA-treated wood for mulch, cutting boards, counter tops, bee hives, compost, structures, or containers for storing human food or animal feed.
- » Never use treated wood in areas where it may come into direct or indirect contact with drinking water.

Cleaning/Maintenance

- » Do not apply harsh cleaning products such as bleach, sodium hydroxide, sodium percarbonate, oxalic acid, and citric acid to CCA-treated wood.
- » Avoid sanding or power washing CCA-treated wood.
- » Regular application of an oil- or water-based penetrating coating (stains, sealants) to CCA-treated wood structures may reduce potential exposure to chemical residues.

For more information and to report incidents to the EPA, contact the National Pesticide Information Center at (800) 858-7378.

Resources on the Web

1. **CPSC CCA Information:**
www.cpsc.gov/whatsnew.html#cca
2. **CPSC Staff Coatings Study:**
www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia07/os/cca.pdf
3. **EPA CCA Information:**
www.epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca/
4. **EPA Consumer Safety Information Fact Sheet:**
www.epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca/cca_consumer_safety.htm
5. **EPA Coatings Study:**
www.epa.gov/nrmrl/pubs/600r10009/600r10009.pdf
6. **Forest Products Laboratory (FPL):**
www.fpl.fs.fed.us/
7. **FPL CCA Alternatives:**
www.fpl.fs.fed.us/cca-alternatives
8. **FPL Estimating the Rate of CCA Leaching:**
www.fpl.fs.fed.us/cca-leaching
9. **FPL Coatings Study:**
www.fpl.fs.fed.us/cca-coatings
10. **FPL Wood Preservation:**
www.fpl.fs.fed.us/cca-wood-preservation



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
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