



In the News

Preserved Wood Enters New Generation: Questions and Answers

A new era is dawning in preserved wood. A transition is under way in the type of pressure-treated wood commonly seen in decks, docks, fences, playsets, gazebos, landscaping and many other uses.

Over the past decade, the manufacturers of the wood preservative known as CCA, or chromated copper arsenate, have developed and refined a number of highly effective, new preservatives. After discussions with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and in light of the growing interest in alternative products, each of the manufacturers has volunteered to make a transition to this new generation of wood preservatives for the consumer and residential market. To expedite this transition, preservative manufacturers, suppliers and pressure treaters will retool their facilities by year-end 2003.

Here are the answers from the Treated Wood Council to the most frequently asked questions about this transition:

Why is the industry making this transition?

Preservative manufacturers have been in discussions with the EPA as part of the periodic review and re-registration process for CCA, the most widely used preservative on the market today.

Since early 2001, the policy debate about new standards for arsenic in drinking water has prompted substantial media attention. Although treated wood represents a tiny fraction compared to all the natural sources of arsenic in the environment, the preservative manufacturers have developed new lines of non-arsenic-based preservatives. To be responsive to current and anticipated customer interest, the manufacturers told EPA they will complete the transition to these new-generation preservatives for non-industrial wood products by the end of 2003.



This playground in Oakland, California, designed by Leathers & Associates, is constructed with one of the new-generation preserved-wood products.

Is CCA-treated wood safe?

Absolutely. Study after study has shown it is safe. One analysis by the Florida Department of Health shows that a child would have to eat a spoonful of dirt — taken from right next to a CCA treated play set — every day, for 30 years, before there would be a potential health