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If CCA-treated wood is safe, why change?

The fundamental safety of CCA-treated wood has not changed, but perceptions in the marketplace have. The preserved wood industry stands by the safety of all wood products treated with CCA, which have been used for nearly 70 years. Manufacturers have made a decision to be responsive to customer interest in new preservatives that provide the same benefits of CCA-treated wood. The time is right now because the industry has developed this new generation of preservatives and can begin the transition.

What are these new generation preservatives?

The manufacturers have developed a number of excellent new preservatives that have been in use for more than a decade. Wood treated with the new-generation preservatives is marketed under the names ACQ Preserve[®], NatureWood[®] and Wolmanized[®] Natural Select[™] wood. These products use copper-based preservatives.

Are the new preservatives safe?

The new preservatives have been studied extensively and approved for use by EPA. Like CCA, they protect and extend the life of wood products for decades.
Are these products available today?

There are limited supplies of wood products treated with the new preservatives on the market today. But that will change as the industry retools its facilities to apply the new generation preservatives.

Will the new generation preserved wood products cost more?

We are not sure at this point what the price difference will be. From what we have seen in the marketplace recently, the price difference is approximately 10 percent to 20 percent higher.

Is it OK to build a deck or play set made with CCA-treated wood?

Yes. EPA looked at the safety of CCA-treated wood as recently as a couple of years ago and reaffirmed its safety when used as recommended. In addition, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said in 1990 that CCA-treated wood is an acceptable material for playground structures.

Can I do anything to prevent exposure from CCA-treated wood?

First of all, studies show that people could be exposed to 30-times more arsenic from food and water and other natural sources than they get from contact with CCA-preserved wood. But if anyone is still concerned about exposure, there are simple steps that can be taken to minimize it - such as covering wooden tables before eating and regular hand washing. If you work with preserved wood, safe handling instructions are detailed in our EPA-approved Consumer Safety Information Sheet. For a copy, visit <http://www.ccasafetyinfo.com/>.

Do you recommend the use of sealants?

While EPA has mentioned this possibility, the agency has also stated that CCA-treated wood doesn't pose "unreasonable risks to the public" as is. Sealants are not necessary from a health standpoint.

Why use preservatives at all?

Preservatives make - and keep - wood products sturdy, stable and safe. They prevent decay, termite damage and extend the life of the products from just a few years to decades.