



MAKE SURE IT'S 4

A WPA campaign



Timber used in contact with the ground or freshwater - called Use (or Hazard) Class 4 in standards¹ – is subject to one of the most challenging environments for timber. It is therefore most important that if preservative treatment is required it is applied at the correct rate to give Class 4 protection.

Changes in regulations² introduced over the past two years affecting wood preservation have resulted largely in a change from the long-established CCA³ treatment to a new generation of copper-organic preservatives. One of the consequences of the change from CCA is that users of treated timber need to get used to a new way of specifying the product because the degree of protection given to a component is more precisely tailored to its use than ever before. This is especially so for Class 4.

The Wood Protection Association is aware that timber treated for example to Class 3 requirements (above ground exposed to the weather) where the biological challenge is much reduced can find its way into the Class 4 market. This presents a risk of premature failure and consequent threat to the reputation of treated timber.

Commenting on the Make Sure It's 4 campaign, Steve Young, director of the [Timber Decking Association](#) said, " Softwood is great for decking so

long as it has been properly pre treated. Where posts and joists will be in contact with the ground only Class 4 treatment is fit for purpose – nothing else will do. The TDA is all about promoting quality and good practice and we very much welcome and support the WPA's campaign to raise user awareness."

The aims of the *Make Sure It's 4* campaign are:

- **Education** - to help create awareness of the Use Class system and encourage correct specification of treatment
- **Quality** - to promote good practice and support WPA member treaters, whilst helping to protect timber's reputation and business against competing materials
- **Promotion** – to raise awareness of the benefits the WPA bring to the industry and provide a campaign members can use to promote their business.

The *Make Sure It's 4* logo can be used on point-of-sale material, labels for packs of Class 4 treated timber and in other ways to raise awareness of the importance of correct treatment for Class 4 uses.



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Notes

1. The relevant standards for wood preservation include:

The WPA Manual – 2005 edition in preparation

BS EN 335-1: Hazard classes of wood and wood-based products against biological attack - Part 1: Classification of hazard classes.

Divides the many situations in which wood may be used into 5 "hazard classes". It is likely that the term "use classes" will be introduced when this standard is revised.

BS EN 351-1: Durability of wood and wood-based products - Preservative-treated solid wood - Part 1: Classification of preservative penetration and retention.

Provides a "vocabulary" for specifiers to use when specifying penetration and level of chemical protection.

BS 8417: Preservation of timber – Recommendations

Provides information for the specifier concerning the treatment of timber for use in the UK, drawing upon appropriate portions of the relevant BS EN documents.

2. Regulations. EU directive 2003/2/EC was implemented in the UK through *The Environmental Protection (Controls on Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2003*, SI 2003/3274 and *The Marketing and Use of Dangerous Substances (No. 4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003*, SR 2003/548. These regulate the uses of arsenic, including in CCA preservatives.

3. CCA. This is the well-known chromated copper arsenate wood preservative formulation invented in 1933 and widely used throughout the world. It remains approved without restriction in many countries.