

Dear Members,

It's hard to believe that we have just recently returned from a holiday, well rested and ready for the year and the New Year has already reached full velocity with 2012 promising to be a year with many new challenges as well as some older ones that need to be dealt with. This issue of the SAWPA newsletter hopes to inform and deal with some of the issues.

TREATED WOOD WASTE - USED IN UNSAFE MANNER



We were recently invited to a conference in Cape Town held on the 2nd of February and on seeing the conference topics we immediately confirmed our attendance. The general theme was on new technologies, engineering and design using engineered timber products, but one topic stood out and raised concern i.e. *"Occurrence of CCA-treated timber in Caterers' fuel wood stocks in the Cape Town region"*. SAWPA notified our members in the Western and Southern Cape regions of the conference and also made contact with the presenter of the paper, an associate Professor at UCT, to familiarize ourselves with the background and content of the presentation. Following some telephonic and e-mail discussions we requested a further meeting between the UCT research team and a SAWPA delegation, consisting of myself and Doug Sayce, representing our CCA manufacturer members. This meeting was held on the 1st of February at UCT with the purpose of finding out what led to the research, the extent of the risk, and how we could ensure that the matter is addressed in a responsible manner by industry. The research clearly showed that treated wood waste is used by informal caterers and that there is evidence of arsenic emissions taken up into the food prepared by the caterers as well as through inhalation by the caterers and their clientele.

The safe use, disposal and handling of treated timber and waste has in the past been a discussion point at various forums and regional meetings, even at the recent CPA road show which SAWPA arranged around the country. The situation which has now surfaced in Cape Town shows that our efforts are not successful and that we would have to make a more serious effort in getting the message across on the warnings and safe handling, use and disposal of treated wood. We believe that there are many different reasons for the problem ranging from our own backyard to the regulators, i.e.:

- Warnings and safety information is not passed on to the purchasers by all manufacturers;
- Merchants, retailers, contractors and builders are either not fully informed of the dangers of treated wood waste or they are choosing to ignore the warnings;
- Contractors and builders are not managing and correctly disposing of their off cuts at registered landfills and thus allowing it to be scavenged by their own workers or by vagrants from the building sites.
- Even if disposed of correctly, the incapacity of the Government, whether local, provincial or national, to regulate the landfill sites and prohibit scavenging by informal dwellers that live off these landfills, is probably the biggest challenge.

During last year’s regional meetings and the CPA talks we informed our members that safety leaflets will be made available by SAWPA for circulation to our members, merchants, contractors etc. Please note that the leaflet for CCA specifically is now available from us (See attached) .We have had 6000 copies made and would urge you to make use of the leaflets. It is also available on our Website should you choose to print your own. Perhaps it is time that the industry seriously relook the issue of making it compulsory to mark/tag treated timber and/or attach the relevant information on sales documentation. However when one views it in the context of the Consumer Protection Act, it is already required that crucial information, e.g. warnings need to be communicated to the end user/consumer.

We, as an industry (manufacturers, merchants, contractors using treated wood) need to be aware of the fact that there is a lot at risk and in light of the review of all class 1 pesticides, including CCA, underway with the Registrar, one serious incident of arsenic related illness or death caused by ingestion and inhalation from poisoned food can have a detrimental effect on the future use of CCA as a wood preservative in South Africa.

SAWPA is currently also in discussion with “Engineers without Borders” at UCT to see how we can assist them in getting the message across to the informal catering industry (national level) not to use processed wood but only harvested fire wood. This could be the start of contributing to our social responsibility and support.

FORESTRY WORKER WAGES

Government Notice 30, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No.75 of 1997 - Sectoral Determination 12, Forestry Worker Sector, South Africa was published on the 18th of January 2012 to amend the previous determination of 27 March 2009 and it also gives the required increases for the following two years with the intention of getting the minimum wage in line with the farm worker sector:

2. Minimum Wages

- I. *With the effect from 1 April 2102, an employer must pay a forest worker at least the minimum wage prescribed in terms of table 1.*
- II. *An employer must pay a forestry worker who works 45 ordinary hours of work per week –*
 - a. *at least the weekly or monthly wage as set out in table 1; or*
 - b. *by agreement between the employer and the forestry worker, at least an hourly rate set out in table 1 for every hour or part of an hour that the forestry worker works*

<i>Table 1: Minimum wages for employees in the Forestry Sector</i>								
<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>			<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>			<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>		
<i>1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013</i>			<i>1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014</i>			<i>1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015</i>		
<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>
<i>R 1428.70</i>	<i>R 329.72</i>	<i>R 7.32</i>	<i>98% of farm workers wage</i>			<i>100% of farm workers wage</i>		

Government Notice 29, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No.75 of 1997 - Sectoral Determination 13, Farm Worker Sector, South Africa, also published on the 18th of January 2012, gives the following regarding farm workers:

Table 1: Minimum wages for employees in the Farm worker Sector

<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>			<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>			<i>Minimum rate for the period</i>		
<i>1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013</i>			<i>1 March 2013 to 28 February 2014</i>			<i>1 March 2014 to 28 February 2015</i>		
<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Hourly</i>
<i>R 1503.90</i>	<i>R 374.10</i>	<i>R 7.71</i>	<i>Previous year's minimum wage + CPI* + 1.5%</i>			<i>Previous year's minimum wage + CPI* + 1.5%</i>		
<i>* The CPI to be utilised is the available CPI for the lowest quintile as released by Statistics South Africa six weeks prior to the increment date.</i>								

WOODEX 22-24 March 2012

Please note that the final dates for the WOODEX for Africa exhibition and conference will be from the 22nd to the 24th of March at the Gallagher Convention Centre, with the conference held over the first two days. SAWPA will be occupying a stand in a pavilion hosting other industry associations as well as the Wood Foundation. SAWPA will also be presenting a talk at the conference on the afternoon of Friday the 23rd on primary wood preservation and it will be targeted at anyone wanting to know more about primary wood preservation, the process, the choices the uses etc, including but not limited to specifiers, contractors, merchants etc.

The Keynote speaker at the conference will be Riaan Munster the world famous South African solo adventurer, who will be sharing his experiences with the delegates and will focus on the theme of sustainability and overcoming challenges. A draw card to the exhibition will be Riaan Garforth-Venter better known as "Die Nutsman", who will be sharing his passion for wood by building a deck, work bench and picnic table at the show.

Come and pay us a visit at the SAWPA stand. As a proud supporter and exhibitor SAWPA received 200 complimentary tickets which are available to its members. Kindly contact the SAWPA offices if you want us to send you complimentary tickets. For more information about WOODEX for Africa, including the full conference programme or, to register online for the conference, visit www.woodexforafrica.com

TALKING ROT

- Promotional leaflets and posters – Please make use of the informative posters and leaflets which SAWPA makes available to the members free of charge. For more information visit our website or contact SAWPA.
- Hits to the SAWPA website during January was an incredible 29 660. This is quite an achievement and from the stats we received it showed that we have hits from all over the world with the majority being local.
- Please note that our website can now be accessed by using either www.sawpa.org.za or www.sawpa.co.za
- Members who did not receive our 2012 calendar or who would like additional copies must please inform us so that we can send it to you. It seems the postal service is not functioning as it should, with many calendars being lost in the post as well as a substantial amount being returned.
- IRG 43 – The 43rd International Research Group for Wood Preservation will be held in Kuala Lumpur from the 6th to the 10th of May 2012. Please contact us if you are interested and require more information.

BRUCE BREEDT

SAWPA accepts no responsibility for any claim made in this newsletter.