



South African Wood Preservers Association

Newsletter 214

December 2017



Dear Members

SAWPA would like to wish all our members and their loved ones a very blessed and peaceful Christmas and holiday season.

Please note, the SAWPA offices will close on December 15th and re-open January 8th 2018.

RADIO PROMOTION AND INFOMERCIALS

SAWPA was invited to take part in a MixFM Buildaid Radio interview on November the 8th that dealt with LOOKING AFTER WOODEN ELEMENTS IN YOUR HOME. The interview covered mainly surface protection coatings, but it gave us the opportunity to briefly introduce primary wood preservation, as well as SAWPA and the industry to the listeners. This interview paves the way for further in-depth interviews planned for the future specifically around primary wood preservation, and what the general public should know about treated timber.

Apart from this, we are investigating the possibility of short infomercials on local radio stations, in the local language of areas plagued with illegal treatment and trade, i.e. Limpopo, KZN and the Eastern Cape. The emphasis being on informing the local population on the difference between properly treated and illegally treated timber, and risks to them as end-users regarding, longevity and efficacy, as well as them wasting their money on something that can never perform.

ILLEGAL TREATMENT

Based on recent reports and a visit to Tzaneen it became clear that the illegal trade in the region has spiralled to a level where the volumes involved point to organised and syndicated operations that is seriously impacting and threatening markets traditionally supplied by the formal and compliant plants. The biggest stimulus seemingly being the theft of timber ravaging most plantation grown areas in the country. Although it seemed that most of the smaller illegal operations reported to the NRCS was no longer operating at the reported sites, it was clear that some of the reported operations are still continuing and on a large organised scale. We immediately took this up with the NRCS inspector responsible for the region, who undertook to follow up on the matter. We also contacted a transport company reported to be involved, who has since realised that they were aiding an illegal trade, and undertook to no longer do so.

Because of the severity in increase of illegal treatment trade fuelled by theft of timber, with little effective regulating and policing by the NRCS and SAPS, SAWPA has taken it under consideration to seek other avenues in trying to deal with the growing problem. Avenues that will include a stronger stance towards the NRCS because of their apparent inefficiency, whilst industry are required to pay levies for regulation, and further looking towards finding support and assistance from other institutions, e.g. DAFF, DTI, The Public Protector, the Consumer Commissioner, the Competitions Commissioner, etc. to emphasise the scale of the problem and finding ways to stop it. Our first interaction came during a Minister's CEO Forum meeting (DAFF) held last week, where we raised the matter with the acting DG of DAFF, which we will follow up with a formal letter to his office and the office of the DDG for Forestry. The aim is to get these entities to fully understand the severity and impact on our industry and to get them to interact and put pressure on the NRCS to fulfil their mandate in protecting not just the consumer, but more importantly the formal law-abiding industry.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

An explanatory summary of The National Minimum Wage Bill, due to come into effect on the 1 May 2018, was gazetted on the 17th of November 2017. The bill also includes schedules outlining some interim deviation subject to the main context, and a memorandum on the objectives of the NMW. Members who would like to study the bill can access it directly on the government website https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/171124B31-2017_National_Minimum_Wage_a.pdf

Some important things to note:

1. The NMW will come into effect on 1 May 2018.
2. Although the NMW will be R20.00 per hour, for forestry workers it will be set initially at R18.00 per hour. For treatment plant workers, pole producers or sawmills, the R20.00 per hour will apply.
3. In terms of clause 5 of the NMW Bill, this wage excludes:
 - a. Any payment made to enable a worker to work including any transport, equipment, tool, food or accommodation allowance;
 - b. Any payment in kind including - e.g. rations, board and accommodation etc.;
 - c. Gratuities, including bonuses, tips or gifts; and
 - d. Any other category of prescribed payments.
4. It will be based on "ordinary hours of work" – in the case of forestry workers this is 45 hours per week, and for treatment plants, pole or sawmills, it will be based on the agreed hours of work per plant.
5. Importantly, in terms of clause 4.6 of the NMW Bill, it is an unfair labour practice to unilaterally alter wages, hours of work or other conditions of employment in connection with the implementation of the NMW. This clause takes retrospective effect from 1 May 2017.

In essence, this means that employers will, w.e.f. 1 May 2018;

- have to pay their workers a minimum of R20.00 per hour worked (R18:00 for forestry workers); and
- not be able to unilaterally adjust hours worked downwards in order to lessen the impact on their total wage bill.

On an hourly basis this may mean increases on the current minimum wage applicable to some employees in the forestry and sawmilling sector, and could well lead to job losses. Indeed, research carried out and reported on in the impact assessment estimates that between 205 000 and 897 000 jobs in total could be lost through the introduction of the NMW!

DEA VISITS TO TREATMENT PLANTS

Members must take note that according to reports received, the Department of Environmental Affairs (Green Scorpions) has in the last week intensified visits to timber treatment plants in Gauteng and we suspect that the same will apply in all other regions. Members will recall that industry was forewarned of this in a letter at the end of last year. We trust that most plants have initiated and implemented management plans, and corrections and improvements on obvious shortcomings. In a recent communication received from DEA we were also informed that the department was still considering the appeal SAWPA raised with them on the issue of whether CCA plants must be in position of an Air Emission Licence.

IRG49 SANDTON – 29 APRIL TO 3 MAY 2018 HOSTED BY SAWPA



A second notification regarding the international IRG49 conference scheduled to take place in Sandton from 29 April to 3 May 2018, and organised by SAWPA was recently circulated by the IRG-WP secretariat. The conference starts off on the Sunday afternoon with the official registration followed by a welcome reception in the evening. The main conference will run from Monday to Thursday, and apart from the opening and closing plenary sessions, the rest of the conference program will run in parallel sessions, giving delegates the opportunity to move between the two rooms. Wednesday afternoon will be dedicated to a half day excursion by bus to nearby places of interest, and will include a dinner at the last venue. The conference ends with a banquet dinner and party on the Thursday night. In addition, we are also planning an optional post conference 1-day open vehicle safari tour for IRG delegates, of which more information will soon be posted on the “Travel” section of the www.irg49.co.za website. Please see attached copy of the flyer for more information on IRG49.

NEWSLETTER OFFCUTS

- The hits to the SAWPA website for October and November was respectively 46968 and 55745.
- The 2018 SAWPA Calendars were posted to all the members as well as specifiers, architects, engineers and merchants and should have reached you by now. If not please keep a look out for it in your post box. If any members require additional copies, please let us know, as we have some extra copies available.
- If you like to view any of the previous SAWPA newsletters go to <http://sawpa.co.za/newsletters.php>

Regards

BRUCE BREEDT

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