

# Guidance Note

## Understanding Hazard Classes

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South African Wood Preservers Association

According to NRCS VC 9092, The Compulsory Specification for Preservative Treated Timber, any preservative treated timber product claiming to be preservative treated must be branded as specified in the relevant SANS product standards. An important part of the brand is the Hazard Class, which indicates the service conditions to which the product is exposed and the level of treatment or level of protection that must be applied to the wood.

The Hazard Classes have been defined as follows:

Hazard Class	Exposure	Service condition	Hazard	Example uses
H2	Inside above ground	Protected from wetting, no leaching.	Borers and termites	Framing, flooring, furniture, interior joinery, roof trusses
H3	Outside above ground	Periodic moderate wetting and leaching	Moderate decay, borers and termites	Weatherboards, fascias, framing, above ground components of fencing, playgrounds, pergolas, landscaping timber
H4	Outside in-ground	<u>Normal</u> in-ground wetting and leaching, <u>non-critical</u> applications	Severe decay, borers and termites	Fence poles/posts, landscaping timbers, playground structures, building poles, carports, pergolas, guardrail posts, agricultural poles <u>not</u> used under frequent irrigation and in nutrient rich soils
H5 (H4V)	Outside in-ground with or in fresh water	<u>Extreme</u> wetting and leaching, <u>critical</u> application	Very severe decay, borers and termites	Piling, house stumps, transmission and telephone poles, cooling towers, building poles, retaining walls, livestock pens, agricultural poles under irrigation and in highly nutrient soils, e.g. <i>eucalyptus vineyard poles</i>
H6	Marine waters	Prolonged immersion in sea water	Decay and marine wood borers	Marine piles, jetty cross bracing, jetty landing steps, slipways, boat hulls

Generally, the higher the Hazard Class, the greater the penetration and retention of the preservative specified in the SANS Standards.

For more information on preservative treated timber, contact SAWPA at 011 974 1061 or [admin@sawpa.co.za](mailto:admin@sawpa.co.za), or visit our website at [www.sawpa.co.za](http://www.sawpa.co.za)