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## Treated Wood Helps Protect the Environment

Without pressure treated wood, Canada would have to harvest another forest the size of Prince Edward Island every year. The pressure treating process extends the service life of wood from three to 10 times longer than untreated wood. There are utility poles and trestle bridges across Canada that have been in service for more than 80 years. In addition to utility poles and bridges, pressure treated wood is used for highway guard rails, railway ties and treated wood products destined for consumer use.

Wood Preservation Canada believes it is important that Canadians understand the many environmental and economic benefits inherent in pressure treated wood. While wood from some species of trees naturally lasts longer than others, all wood eventually succumbs to the elements and living enemies. Insects, fungi and other microorganisms feed and live on the wood causing it to decay. Wood that is in direct contact with the ground and/or water is especially susceptible to these conditions. But the process of pressure treating wood helps protect it from these destructive elements, extending its service life significantly.

The treatment process involves forcing stable and leach-resistant preservatives into the wood cells where they remain for decades to protect the wood and ensure its structural integrity.

It is equally important that the treating process does not alter wood's essential characteristics - it continues to look and feel good for decades. Treated wood maintains its structural integrity longer.

To a homeowner planning a home improvement project, the benefits are considerable. For example, an average backyard deck might call for wood from two or three trees. A deck built with untreated wood would likely have to be replaced every few years. Pressure treated wood, on the other hand, can last up to 50 years - enough time to replace the two or three trees used.

To help inform people about the environmental and practical benefits of treated wood, several years ago Wood Preservation Canada, known then as the Canadian Institute of Treated Wood, or CITW, launched a program called Treated Wood Saves Trees. Amongst its goals is the establishment of firm environmental guidelines for its members and free information for Canadians concerning the benefits and issues related to using pressure treated wood products.

Wood Preservation Canada works with government agencies to promote health and safety standards. To that end, the association has made a wide variety of information concerning treated wood issues available to the public free of charge.