

## **THE CANADIAN LUMBER STANDARDS ACCREDITATION BOARD TREATED WOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

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### **Extended Abstract**

The Canadian Lumber Standards Accreditation Board (CLSAB) recently launched a new Treated Wood Program with the support and involvement of Wood Preservation Canada. This presentation provides background on the CLSAB, their history and involvement in lumber quality control and certification and their recent expansion of activities into treated wood inspection and certification.

CLSAB began initially as an administrative board in the Canadian Lumber Standards division of the Canadian Standards Association. In 1960, a stipulation under the National Housing Act required that lumber be grade stamped, which highlighted the need to standardize and build integrity into the grade stamping process. This became the role of CLSAB.

CLSAB is overseen by an independent Board of Directors, which works through consensus to set overall policy and direction, while an Executive Committee administers activities between meetings. Board members are chosen to represent various stakeholders with interests in lumber including lumber producers, governments, research organizations, national rules writing and certification organizations, organizations concerned with building construction and building codes, national residential builders, mortgage lenders and others. Treated wood interests are represented by lumber producers who also have interests in treating plants.

CLSAB staff includes a President and CEO, a Vice President, Technical Operations and Field Inspection Supervisors who are responsible for control of grading and other activities carried out by accredited Grading Agencies. Grading agencies are responsible for inspection and quality control of mill or treatment facility-level activities across Canada.

In North American and many other parts of the world, lumber for structural applications must be examined and given a grade stamp or certificate, which allows users to assess how the product will perform. For almost 50 years CLSAB has been overseeing this

system that ensures lumber is properly identified and that the grade stamp can be relied upon to tell the user where and how the product can be used. This experience was the basis for Wood Preservation Canada to approach CLSAB and request the creation of a similar quality control and inspection system for the treated wood industry.

CLSAB inspection and certification is relied upon by a number of users including builders and contractors, architects, designers, building inspectors, home owners and anyone who uses lumber or treated wood products and must be aware of how those products will perform in certain applications.

The roles of CLSAB that will relate to the treated wood industry include:

- The accreditation and supervision of agencies accredited to inspect treated wood, including performance audits at treatment facilities;
- Establishment of policy for and control of the identification, assessment, grading, and tagging or certification of treated wood in Canada; and
- Support to help industry, retailers and consumers understand the new Treated Wood inspection program and what it entails.

CLSAB reviews and approves grading rules and other standards related to lumber. The standards for treated wood are the CSA 080 standards which CLSAB will inspect to. Any revision or interpretation of those CSA standards will be left to the appropriate CSA Technical Committees.

The grading rules and technical standards for lumber are based on a number of factors such the species, the number and location of natural defects such as knots, splits, cracks, or other defects, the moisture content of the wood, any special treatments the wood has had, and other factors. Similarly, treated wood standards are also based on factors such as species, chemicals, processes, pressure and length of time in the treatment chamber.

The CLSAB system for treated wood inspection will provide a recognized tag that will provide information about those factors (species, chemicals, processes, etc) and how they are combined to allow the treated wood to be identified as meeting the appropriate CSA standard. This will be presented on the tag (or stamp in the case of PWF) that over time, will become a trusted and easy-to-read way to ensure the right products is used in the right applications.

The treated wood tag represents be an all-encompassing system that includes:

- Training and supervision of treaters;
- Recognized and accepted CSA standards inspected and enforced by CLSAB;
- Monthly Review of operations at treatment facilities by accredited Grading Agencies;

The tag (or stamp) will be attached to a bundle and will clearly show species or species combination, will indicate that the product has been inspected and meets the requirements of the CLSAB Treated Wood Program, which applicable CSA standard is met, and the agency that has inspected the treating plant. These requirements have been incorporated into Canadian Building Codes in the same way structural lumber standards are included in the building codes.

CLSAB is responsible for accrediting all organizations wishing to inspect under the Treated Wood Program. In order to accredit an organization, CLSAB examines the applicant to verify the qualifications of management and inspectors. CLSAB verifies the organization's competence and reliability, their independence from any particular treating facility, their financial stability and the procedures they have in place for certifying and supervising treaters, for conducting on-site inspections, and for record keeping.

The organization must describe the controls it will put in place for the use and disposal of tags or stamps as well as the content and timing of reports to the CLSAB. Accreditation provides authority to CLSAB to check treated wood products wherever they are located. Quality control requirements must be included in all treating plant licensing agreements between the organization and the treatment facility, including the frequency of inspections. The organization must set out the disciplinary actions it will take against a treatment facility if necessary.

As a new program for both the industry and CLSAB, the implementation of this program will be a learning experience for all those involved. For example, there are situations where the CSA standard specifies a certain procedure that is somewhat different from accepted industry practice. CLSAB's role is to inspect to the standard and if changes or interpretations are required, they will need to be addressed by CSA.

CLSAB is pleased to be involved in this program and welcomes the opportunity to work with the treated wood industry to implement a successful program that will ensure product quality, consistent standards and public safety.