

Progress Report on the Development of the Code of
Good Practices for the Canadian Wood Protection Industry

by

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Chemicals that are used to preserve wood, such as creosote, pentachlorophenol, copper, chromium, zinc or arsenic salts, are toxic chemicals and deleterious if released to the environment in sufficient quantities. Therefore there is an environmental need to ensure that the industry adopts good housekeeping and handling practices and properly treats or disposes of any toxic chemical.

Although the effluent volumes discharged from wood protection plants are not particularly large, the effluents can contain high concentrations of toxic substances and, in addition, any sloppy housekeeping practices may result in serious contamination of groundwater which has the potential of travelling to nearby streams and rivers.

Since most of the Canadian wood protection plants are located in B.C., in 1981 the EPS (Environmental Protection Service) Pacific Regional office established the British Columbia Chlorophenolate Wood Protection Task Force to investigate the use of chlorophenolates at wood protection facilities in B.C. and to develop practical measures for environmental and health protection. The members of the Task Force included representatives of federal and provincial governments agencies, forest industry companies and forest industry labour unions. The EPS retained Dr. Henning and Dr. Konasewich to conduct a technical review of wood protection practices in British Columbia and to develop a draft "Code of Good Practice" for the design and operation of wood protection facilities. The Code provides recommendations for workers' health and safety and for the storage, transportation and disposal of chlorophenolate liquids and contaminated water and solid wastes.

The draft referred to as the "Code of Good Practice" was presented to the Task Force by the contractors during August 1981. This initiated a two-year review process by the Task Force which included input from other experts in both industry and government. The result of this comprehensive development and review process is the completion of the document entitled "Chlorophenolate Wood Protection - Recommendations for Design and Operation", which was published jointly by Environment Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Environment in December 1983. This document is referred to as the "B.C. Wood Protection Code".

A significant amount of background information has been included in the B.C. code which would help the users to understand the rationale for the recommendation of the design and operational practices.

Again, because of the highly toxic chemicals used in the wood protection industry, last year EPS management decided to assess the B.C. code on the wood protection industry and make the necessary adjustments to apply it nationally.

As a first step, the B.C. code was distributed through the EPS regional offices to the provinces, industry representatives and the National Industrial Association for their review and comments.

Mr. Jack Shield, a former employee of Forintek Canada Corporation was retained as a consultant to review and incorporate the comments received and modify the B.C. document, so that it could be used nationally. The national draft code was completed in last December and was distributed to all concerned for their final review and comment. The French translation of the draft has just been completed. It will soon be distributed for review by Quebec industry. Once this review is completed the code is expected to be finalized. We are planning to organize a seminar early next year primarily to discuss with industry representatives their concerns and plans with respect to pollution abatement.

In closing, I would like to say that it is important for the Federal Government and Provincial Governments to cooperate in their activities, it is equally important, indeed vital, that a high degree of cooperation with the wood protection industry be developed by EPS to ensure that the interests of all Canadians in a clean environment can be protected while maintaining healthy and vigorous industrial organizations which can live and prosper.