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Health and Safety Executive		Sector Information Minute	
Commercial and Consumer Services, Transportation and Utilities Sector (CACTUS)		SIM 05/2004/08	
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Target Audience

FOD Inspectors with responsibility for Children's Playgrounds

COPPER, CHROME AND ARSENIC TREATED TIMBER IN CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

This SIM provides information on the use of copper, chrome and arsenic (CCA) treated timber in children's playgrounds. The attached information document can be made available to interested parties outside HSE.

BACKGROUND

1. EU directive 2003/2/EC introduces a partial ban on the use of CCA as a timber treatment as CCA is considered to be a carcinogen. The risks from CCA are considered to be very small but a very precautionary approach is being taken in this case. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are implementing the Directive in the UK by means of the Environmental Protection (Controls of Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2003.
2. The main concern is over the arsenic content.
3. These Regulations will prohibit the use of timber with CCA with effect from 30 June 2004 in applications where there is likely to be repeated skin contact by users.
4. The Regulations will not apply to CCA treated timber already in use.
5. Concerns have been raised already by those involved in children's play about the implications of the Directive and the Regulations as well as the declaration of CCA as a carcinogen.

INFORMATION

6. The attached Information Document ([Appendix](#)) provides background information about this subject and provides advice to play providers and parents. The Information Document may be made available to interested parties. It will also be of use in answering queries directly.

ACTION BY INSPECTORS

7. No specific action is required by Inspectors.
8. Play providers and users should be assured that there is no need to remove CCA treated

items that are otherwise in good order simply because of the presence of CCA. The risk from CCA in this case is extremely low.

9. Should it become necessary to remove CCA treated timber for other reasons, e.g. because of damage due to vandalism, then the material should be treated as hazardous waste and disposed of accordingly by a suitable contractor.

FURTHER INFORMATION

10. Further information can be obtained from the Entertainment Section, CACTUS, Glasgow Office. Tel: (VPN) 521-3012.

Date First Issued: 06 April 2004

Appendix ([Para 6](#))

HSE Information Document

Copper, Chrome and Arsenic Treated Timber in Children's Playgrounds

1. The European Union has partially banned the further use of copper, chrome and arsenic (CCA) for the treatment of timber. This ban comes into effect on 30 June 2004 but will not apply to CCA treated timber already in use.
2. This ban is implemented in the UK by means of the Environmental Protection (Controls on Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2003. From 30 June 2004 it will be illegal to market timber treated with CCA materials for certain uses including use in making children's play equipment.
3. The ban is based on concerns that CCA is a carcinogenic material. The risk is considered to be very low but a highly precautionary approach has been taken. The risk to health for those coming into contact with timber that has already been treated with CCA is very low.
4. CCA treated timber is often used in the manufacture of children's play equipment due to the good protection it gives against rot, limiting the need for ongoing treatment and the good visual appearance of the treated material.
5. Play providers and parents of children who use playgrounds with CCA treated timber items will want to know what should be done.
6. There is no need for existing CCA treated timber to be removed – the risk to people coming into contact with the timber is extremely low and does not justify a removal programme. Provided the timber remains in good condition, it should continue in use. The Regulations do not apply to such timber.
7. Once CCA treated timber comes to the end of its safe or useful service life, a suitable contractor should dispose of it as hazardous waste. It should not be burned or be chipped for further use.

8. Further information on the Regulations can be obtained from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The contact is andrew.scarsbrook@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

9. Advice on alternative timber treatments can be obtained from British Wood Preserving & Damp Proofing Association
1 Gleneagles House, Vernon Gate, Derby, DE1 1UP
Tel: 01332 225100
Fax: 01332 225101
Email: info@bwpda.co.uk

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