

Implementation of the International Plant Protection Convention Standard for Wood Packaging Material

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has amended the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to incorporate the requirements of the *International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM): Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material (WPM) in International Trade* (ISPM Publication No. 15). The new requirements, which are detailed at 7 CFR 319.40, were published in the September 16, 2004, *Federal Register* and became effective September 16, 2005. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) approved the international standard for WPM in March 2002.

APHIS revised its import regulation in response to increased interceptions of nonnative pests associated with WPM at U.S. ports-of-entry. If left unchecked, pests imported with WPM could cause significant economic damage to the agricultural and forest resources of the United States.

This standard requires WPM used in international trade to be treated. The approved treatments are (1) heat treatment (HT) to a minimum wood core temperature of 56 °C for a minimum of 30 minutes or (2) fumigation with methyl bromide (MB).

The WPM also must be marked with the IPPC logo and the two-letter International Organization for Standardization code for the country that treated the WPM. Additionally, WPM must be marked with a unique number assigned by the exporting country's national plant protection organization to the treatment facility, and either the abbreviation HT or MB. Paper certifications (treatment certificates) are no longer required or accepted in lieu of the IPPC logo.

Exemptions From New Requirements

WPM made entirely of manufactured wood material (e.g., particleboard, plywood, oriented strandboard), wine and whiskey barrels, and WPM with a thickness of 6 mm or less are exempt from the treatment and marking requirements. WPM of Canadian origin is

also exempt from the treatment and marking requirements (7 CFR 319.40–3).

Three-Phase Enforcement Plan

Enforcement of the new WPM regulation is being handled in a three-phase approach, in coordination with not only the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) but also with APHIS' plant protection organization counterparts in Canada and Mexico.

Phase one of the enforcement plan began September 16, 2005, and continued through January 31, 2006. For the duration of that phase of enhanced compliance, CBP provided importers with official documentation when the shipments are determined "not compliant" during routine port-of-entry inspections. APHIS received information from CBP on any ISPM 15-marked shipments found to contain timber pests and followed up with the affected country's plant protection organization.

The second phase of enforcement actions began February 1, 2006, and continues through July 4, 2006. During this phase, APHIS and CBP require all commodity imports with WPM consisting of pallets and crates entering or transiting the United States to be compliant with the ISPM 15 treatment and marking standard. WPM that does not meet the ISPM 15 standard will not be allowed to enter into the United States and will be reexported. Shipments containing packing material that is in violation of the rule may be allowed entry only if the CBP Port Director determines that it is feasible to separate the approved material from the noncompliant portion of the shipment. Arrangements to have the noncompliant WPM exported from the United States would be required before any reworked cargo can be released to the consignee. All costs associated with this process are the responsibility of the importer.

During the second phase of the enforcement, CBP continues to inform noncompliant importers that use intact, whole, or solid wood as dunnage of their obligation to use ISPM 15-compliant wood in association with their blocked or braced cargos.

Phase three of the enforcement plan begins July 5, 2006. At that time, all WPM entering or transiting through United States must meet the ISPM 15 standard and be free of timber pests. APHIS and CBP will require the immediate reexportation of any ISPM 15 marked WPM that is found to be infested with a live wood-boring pest of the families *Cerambycidae*, *Buprestidae*, *Siricidae*, *Cossidae*, *Curculionidae*, *Platypodidae*, *Sesiidae*, or *Scolytidae*.

Plant pests that attack live trees prior to their being manufactured into WPM will not survive the treatments prescribed in the regulation. If a wood-boring pest is found in marked WPM, it confirms that the WPM has not been treated and marked in accordance with the regulation and will be reexported. The importer will be responsible for any costs or charges associated with the reexportation. This policy is an explanation of the existing regulations and is consistent with the intent of the rule and the Plant Protection Act.

The North American Plant Protection Organization has trilaterally agreed to this phased-in enforcement plan to regulate the movement of WPM into or through the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

To avoid delays and rejection of cargo commodities entering or transiting through the United States, USDA strongly recommends that all importers utilize only ISPM 15-approved WPM or seek alternatives to regulated WPM.

Additional Information

For more information on the wood packaging material regulation, please visit this Web site:
<<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/wpm/import.html>>.

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