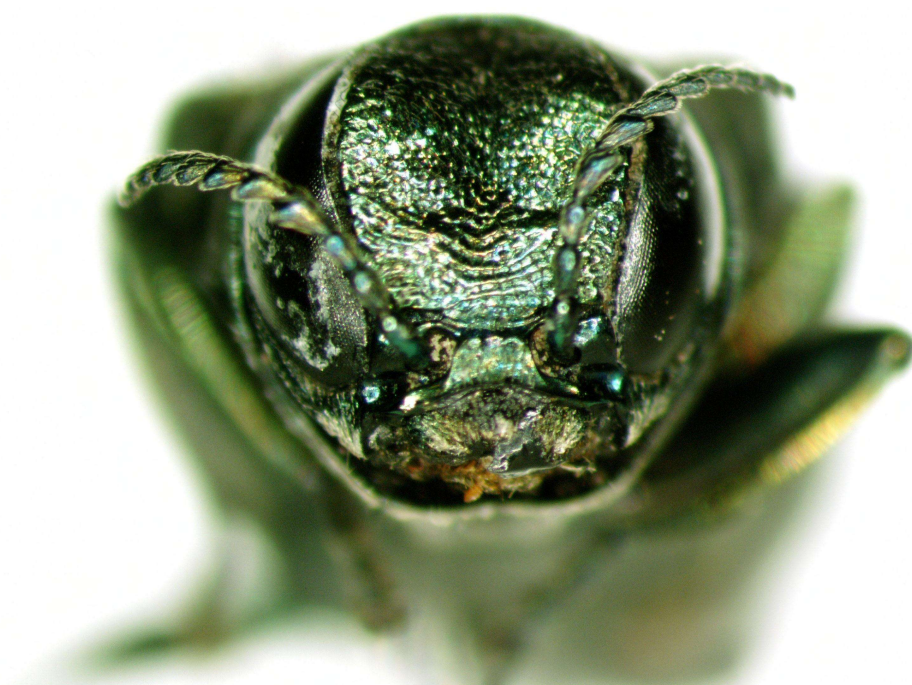


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Wood Packaging Material

Last Modified:



Untreated wood packaging material can allow pests like the emerald ash borer to enter the United States.

Commodities shipped in and out of the United States supported by wood packaging material are at risk of carrying damaging plant pests. Pests like the emerald ash borer and the Asian longhorned beetle can infest the wood and be introduced into the United States. These pests can destroy millions of trees and cost billions of

dollars in losses and damage control.

To protect against harmful pests like these, APHIS has adopted ISPM 15, an international standard with best practices for preventing the spread of harmful pests in wood packaging used in international trade. If you don't follow these practices, you risk having your shipment delayed or re-exported. We work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection agricultural specialists to enforce these [regulations](#) at U.S. ports of entry.

[Learn what ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material looks like](#)

ISPM 15 Compliance

APHIS regulates imported wood packaging material per the International Plant Protection Convention's (IPPC) adopted International Standard 15 ([ISPM 15](#)), "Regulation of wood packaging material in international trade." ISPM 15 is proven to prevent the introduction of harmful pests into the United States. We use the same standard for exports to ensure wood packaging material meets importing countries' requirements and does not spread damaging pests.

The ISPM 15 standard covers any hardwood or softwood packaging for a commodity. Regulated wood packaging material includes, but is not limited to, pallets, skids, pallet collars, containers, crates, boxes, cases, bins, reels, drums, load boards, and dunnage. Wood packaging material made of exempt materials that is combined with regulated, solid wood components must still be treated and marked; examples of exempt materials include plywood, particle board, oriented strand board, and laminated veneer lumber.

As an **importer**, you need to ensure that all wood packaging material entering or transiting the United States is pest-free, debarked, heat-treated or fumigated, and marked with an ISPM 15 logo certifying that it has been appropriately treated. Shipments containing noncompliant wood packaging material will not be allowed to enter the country.

As an **exporter**, you need to know if the [country you are exporting to requires wood packaging material to be ISPM 15-compliant](#). If the country does, then you are responsible for complying with their ISPM 15 wood packaging material requirements.

What Wood Packaging Is Not Regulated?

The following items are considered low risk and are exempt from the ISPM 15 standard:

- Wood packaging material made entirely from thin wood (6 millimeters or less in thickness)
- Wood packaging made wholly of processed wood material, such as plywood, particle board, oriented strand board, or veneer that has been created using glue, heat, pressure, or a combination thereof
- Barrels for wine and spirit that have been heated during manufacture
- Gift boxes for wine, cigars, and other commodities made from wood that have been processed or manufactured in a way that renders them free of pests
- Sawdust, wood shavings, and wood wool
- Wood components permanently attached to freight vehicles and containers

Exception: If these materials are combined with nonmanufactured wood packaging material, you must make sure the nonmanufactured wood packaging material is treated and properly marked.

Sources of ISPM 15-Compliant Wood Packaging Material in the United States

Exporters have three options for obtaining ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material in the United States:

1. Purchase heat-treated or fumigated wood packing material that bears the ISPM 15 mark
2. Become an ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material manufacturer and purchase the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) accredited heat-treated grade mark lumber to construct wood packing material
3. Use a registered ISPM 15 heat treatment or fumigation facility to treat and mark any unmarked wood packing material

You can contact the [ALSC](#) to find sources of compliant wood packaging material or learn how to become an ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material manufacturer.

In Other Countries

If you are an importer, you should source wood packaging material in other countries from a registered and accredited manufacturer. The packing material should be heat treated or fumigated according to the IPPC regulations. You can

contact the [National Plant Protection Organization of the shipment's country of origin](#) for more information.

Treatment Programs

The [American Lumber Standard Committee](#) manages two quality control programs for treatment of wood packaging material under an agreement with APHIS. These programs ensure that wood packaging material labeled with the ISPM 15 official mark has been properly treated in compliance with the ISPM 15 standard. If you are a wood packaging material producer, you must enroll with an [ALSC-accredited inspection agency](#).

Heat Treatment Program

For heat-treated wood packaging material to be ISPM 15-compliant, you must produce it by one of two methods:

- Purchase previously heat-treated lumber with an ALSC-accredited agency mark and use it to construct the wood packaging material, or
- Construct wood packaging material from lumber that is not heat treated, place the product in a heat chamber, and heat treat the wood packaging material product to achieve the minimum wood core temperature of 56 degrees Celsius for at least 30 minutes.

You must then label the product with an ALSC-accredited agency quality mark to show the heat-treated wood packaging material is compliant with ISPM 15. The presence of the mark attests that the wood packaging material meets importing countries' regulations based on ISPM 15.

Methyl Bromide Fumigation Program

Under the methyl bromide fumigation program, wood packaging material must be treated by fumigators certified in the program to be ISPM 15-compliant. The accredited agency quality mark must then be applied.

If you need to have wood packaging material fumigated, you can contact a fumigator registered in the program or register with one of the accredited inspection agencies. You can find a list of [inspection agencies and registered fumigators](#) on the ALSC website.

Purchasing Treated Wood Packaging Material

Exporters can also purchase or reuse treated wood packaging material with the ISPM 15 mark on the secondary market from certified wood packaging material producers. To check that wood packaging material you purchase is compliant, you can contact an inspection agency from the list on the [ALSC website](#).

Other Resources

[ALSC Wood Packaging Material Program Policies](#)

[ALSC Wood Packaging Material Program Enforcement Regulations](#)

Treatment FAQs

What is a quality/treatment mark?

For both heat treatment (HT) and methyl bromide (MB) fumigation programs, the quality/treatment mark consists of:

- The U.S. agency trademark, which is the identifying symbol, logo, or name of the accredited agency and is found outside of the ISPM 15 mark
- The facility identification, which is the wood packaging material product manufacturer assigned facility number
- The HT or MB mark
- The country code, which is the two letter ISO country abbreviation
- The IPPC-approved international symbol for compliant wood packaging material
- "DUN" when the wood packaging material is considered dunnage

Can I make my own ISPM 15 mark?

No. You must be registered with one of the accredited inspection agencies. Here are links for lists of inspection agencies and their contact information:

- [Heat Treatment Program](#)
- [Methyl Bromide Program](#)

Is there a listing of lumber mills where heat-treated lumber may be purchased?

APHIS does not have information about lumber mills that provide HT-marked wood. You should request further information from the inspection agencies.

Is my wood packaging material required to be heat treated and fumigated?

No. wood packaging material is required to be either heat treated to 56 degrees Celsius to the core for at least 30 minutes or fumigated with methyl bromide to the schedule in the ISPM 15 standard.

Is there an expiration date once my wood packaging material has been either heat treated or fumigated?

The intent of the ISPM 15 standard is that once the wood packaging material is treated and officially marked, the treatment does not expire. You can reuse wood packaging material without retreating and remarking.

However, wood packaging material that has been repaired or remanufactured must be either fumigated or heat treated again. The old mark must be obliterated with a new mark applied by one of the inspection agencies.

My wood packaging materials are made up of hardwood. Is hardwood wood packaging material required to be treated and officially marked?

Hardwood wood packaging material is required to be treated and officially marked.

Best Practices for Industry

Tips for Importers

Industry and importers can take many steps to promote ISPM 15 compliance. We encourage companies to adopt these best practices to avoid delayed or destroyed shipments:

- Ask your wood packaging material provider if they are ISPM 15-compliant and accredited. Review the certification provided by the exporting country's [national plant protection organization](#) (NPPO).
- Provide information to the exporter on the [ISPM 15 standard](#).
- Share [regulation information](#) with the exporter to assist them in becoming compliant. The [NPPO](#) will have information on the local program.
- Require ISPM 15 compliance in the contract.
- Require exporters to inspect the wood packaging material for signs of pests when delivered or before use.
- Do a cost benefit analysis if considering alternatives to wood packaging material (such as plastic, particle board, or plywood).
- Understand there is a cost for noncompliance, including penalties, demurrage, re-export costs, and production delays.
- [Increase your exporters' awareness about ISPM 15](#) issues, so they look for the official ISPM mark on the wood packaging material and any signs that pests could be present.

Alternatives to Wood Packaging Material

Importers may consider using alternatives to wood packaging material. The following products are not subject to APHIS regulation:

- Plywood or pressboard
- Plastic pallets
- Oriented strand board
- Hardboard
- Parallel strand lumber
- Synthetic foam
- Metal frames
- Inflated dunnage
- Masonite veneer
- Laminated veneer lumber

Tips for Exporters

Some countries [require you to use ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material](#).

APHIS and the wood packaging material industry administer an export program to guarantee wood packaging material compliance with trading countries' import requirements. The program ensures certified treatment and marking of wood packaging material for international trade, while maintaining the packaging material's traceability.

There are three options for obtaining ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material in the United States:

1. Purchase heat-treated or fumigated wood packaging material that bears the ISPM 15 mark.
2. Become an ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material manufacturer and purchase ALSC-accredited agency, HT grade-marked lumber to construct wood packaging material.
3. Use a registered ISPM 15 heat treatment or fumigation facility to treat and mark any unmarked wood packaging material.

Contact the [ALSC](#) to obtain sources of compliant wood packaging material or become an ISPM 15-compliant wood packaging material manufacturer.

APHIS' Impact

Our Plant Protection and Quarantine program is cracking down on U.S. companies that place counterfeit marks on exported wood packaging material. Official marks certify that the wood was treated in accordance with ISPM 15 and is free of wood-boring tree pests. When companies apply fake marks to untreated wood, they imperil forests in the United States and worldwide. APHIS has prosecuted 88 ISPM 15 fraud cases during the last 11 years and levied \$329,000 in fines and \$54,937 in restitution since 2015.

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