Information Note: Phytosanitary Regulations and what they mean to Wood Products Producers

The phytosanitary certification process is a dynamic, complex international trade issue. Rules of importation vary significantly from one country to another. This report attempts to summarize the “need to know” information for wood product producers as they explore offshore export market opportunities.

What is a Phytosanitary Certificate?

The following information from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), D-99-06: Policy on the Issuance of Phytosanitary Certificates provides a general introduction to, and definition of Phytosanitary Certificates.

Phytosanitary Certificates are official documents issued by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the exporting country to the NPPO of the importing country. Phytosanitary Certificates are issued to indicate that consignments of plants, plant products or other regulated articles meet specified phytosanitary import requirements and conform to the certifying statement printed on the certificate. Most countries stipulate their import requirements in legislation, regulations, other official rules or by Permits to Import issued by the NPPO of the importing country. Bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in the field of plant protection may also indicate the import requirements for specified commodities.

The CFIA issues Phytosanitary Certificates as required by importing countries to indicate that the products covered by the certificate conform to the country’s phytosanitary import requirements. They are official government documents and must be carefully controlled. Although Phytosanitary Certificates facilitate trade, they are not “trade documents” and cannot be demanded or issued by importers, exporters, brokers, banks etc. EFFECTIVE DATE: May 27, 2009 (2nd revision).

The above Phytosanitary Certificates information applies to all regulated products. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has also published information specific to lumber exports, D-03-02: Canadian Heat Treated Wood Products Certification Program (CHTWPCP).

The Canadian Heat Treated Wood Products Certification Program (CHTWPCP) is a phytosanitary certification program administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The CHTWPCP is an officially recognized industry certification program for the export of wood products from Canada. This program was originally designed to meet the specific phytosanitary import requirements of the European Union, as a result of the known presence of pine wood nematode, Bursaphelenchus xylophilus in Canada.
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The program is now accepted by a growing number of countries to meet their import requirements for heat treated wood products to prevent the movement of plant quarantine pests. The CHTWPCP establishes the requirements needed to develop a quality management system under which registered facilities must operate to produce and/or handle heat treated wood products as well as meet the documentation requirements for export purposes. Facilities participating in the CHTWPCP must operate under the provisions of the QSM-02: Quality System Requirements for Facility Registration under the Canadian Wood Packaging Certification Program (CWPCP) or the Canadian Heat Treated Wood Products Certification Program (CHTWPCP).

The CHTWPCP also establishes the responsibilities of service providers in performing the audit function of the program. Currently, the principal oversight body for the CHTWPCP is the Canadian Lumber Standards Accreditation Board (CLSAB). The CLSAB via their accredited Lumber Grading Agencies deliver the audit function for their registered facilities in assuring compliance to the phytosanitary certification requirements as outlined in this policy, EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2011(5th Revision).

Wood Dunnage and Lumber have different regulations:

Wood dunnage that is often attached to the bottom of lumber packages (to facilitate forklift-handling) needs to be ISPM-15 stamped, while the lumber that is being exported does not need to be stamped. This can be a confusing requirement for first time exporters. Export regulations for wood packaging material; lathe, dunnage and crating is not the same as the export regulations for lumber. Most WTO countries require ISPM stamped dunnage and the current US market exemption may be removed as early as April 2012. As part of the Phytosanitary Certificate issuing process, inspectors will ensure that the ISPM 15 stamp is clearly visible on all dunnage used for export lumber shipments.

How does my company obtain a Phytosanitary Certificate for an export lumber shipment?

Most offshore export lumber shipments are first transported by truck or rail from the mill site to an ocean freight container loading facility. US export lumber shipments do not require phytosanitary certificates. Lumber companies will often contract a freight forwarding company to handle offshore export documentation, container loading and delivery of the loaded, sealed container to the port. It is the responsibility of the exporting company “shipper” to order the inspection. Phytosanitary certificates are issued only after a specified volume of lumber has been physically inspected, prior to loading it into a container. For this reason the most practical location for the inspection to take place is at the container-loading yard. In many cases the freight forwarding company will arrange this inspection by coordinating the inspectors visit after all the lumber for a particular vessel shipment has arrived from the mill and before the container-loading schedule. If the lumber is being shipped by break-bulk vessel the inspections are usually done at the port of export. The phytosanitary certificate is only valid for a two-week period prior to vessel loading. If the freight forwarding company is not contracted to arrange the inspection, lumber companies can contact the CFIA directly to request an inspection.

CFIA inspectors are looking for any signs of bark, soil, insects (pests), and other export destination country specific requirements such as proof of heat-treating. If the shipment is rejected there may be an opportunity to exclude certain packages from the shipment during the time of the inspection. If breaking open packages and replacing pieces is required it is likely that a re-inspection will need to be scheduled. There are charges for the Phytosanitary Certificate inspection and document processing. These charges vary according to the volume and inspection location. In general terms, lumber companies often strive to have larger volumes prepared for a single inspection. This way the one-time
inspection cost, that typically range between $150 and $250 per inspection, can be applied to a larger volume of lumber. For first time exporter however, a smaller “trial shipment” of one or more 40’ container loads may be the best option to ensure that the lumber and packaging meets the Phytosanitary Certificate standards of the export destination country before a large volume is transported to the container loading facility. The trial shipment could help companies avoid expensive repackaging or additional transportation charges if the shipment is rejected and needs to be removed from the container yard.

**How does my company find more information on specific Canadian lumber species and individual export destination country requirements?**

Export destination countries and Canadian wood species differ significantly in their Phytosanitary Certificate requirements. For example, Japan does not require a Phytosanitary Certificate for any lumber product or species imported. China requires a Phytosanitary Certificate for all lumber imports and it is recommended that SPF be heat-treated to avoid the potential of the shipment being flagged for fumigation upon entry into China. Korea requires SPF and Larch to be heat-treated. It is important to check the specific country’s requirements before servicing an export contract.

In addition to being export destination country and wood species specific, Phytosanitary Certificate requirements are also under constant review and change frequently. The Canada Wood Group employs a Market Access & Phytosanitary Specialist that can be contacted for specific questions on Phytosanitary Certificate requirements for various export destinations and Canadian wood species, (Contact list below).

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**Links:**

Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
[http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/d-03-02e.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/d-03-02e.shtml)

**References:**
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Phytosanitary Rules, Securing Entry for Canadian Forest Products
Brian Zak, Market Access & Phytosanitary Specialist Canada Wood January 2011 – UBC

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