

November 18th, 2020

Easement document allows further WPM repair option in Brexit lead up

Heat-treated wooden components will be temporarily allowed for the repair of wooden pallets and packaging, increasing options for businesses who want to grow their capacity of ISPM15-compliant wooden packaging material (WPM) before the final Brexit deadline on December 31, 2020.

The new measure was proposed by the UK Government and also approved by the devolved governments on a temporary basis to help raise stocks of compliant WPM in the weeks remaining before the cut-off date, and in the first half of next year. This is because, as the UK Government has stated, from January 1, 2021 it will be a legal requirement for all wood packaging material moving in both directions between UK and the EU to be compliant with a treatment and mark as specified in the International Standard for Phytosanitary measures No 15 (ISPM15).

Accordingly, the temporary easement addendum to the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme (UKWPMMP), which governs ISPM15 in the country, now permits the additional option of ISPM15 repairs to avoid the total retreatment of pallets of repair as required by the original regulations.

The easement is open only to existing members of the UKWPMMP and their approved sites and will be subject to them fulfilling the terms and conditions of the addendum. It will be valid until July 31, 2021.

John Dye, President of the Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation, said: "We support this temporary addendum to the UKWPMMP. It is a further step forward in our industry's preparations for Brexit, which will give companies the ability to repair pallets to ISPM15 standards more rapidly and moves our business further towards its compliance targets."

Using heat-treated wood for repairs is also more energy efficient as it saves a significant amount of kilning capacity when compared to treating the whole of every repaired pallet. We also expect this measure will encourage an increase in repairs, which in turn will help towards Government targets for reuse.+

Companies wishing to take advantage of the easement change need to declare their intention by emailing the UKWPMMP Secretary, who will update the Forestry Commission inspectors and the relevant auditors; this will ensure the right traceability and plant health obligations continue to be met. There are no additional fees for members of the scheme.

Notes:

- Wood packaging material is currently permitted to move freely between most EU countries, so ISPM15 rules previously did not apply to UK/EU movements, meaning no inspections are required between countries in the EU. When the UK leaves the EU Customs Union, we become a ~~third-country~~ which means the UK will be subject to ISPM15 legislation and related border measures.
- The easement is compliant with the requirements of ISPM15 and the use of heat-treated wood for repair offers the same assurance about biosecurity as the heat-treatment of untreated pallets.
- TIMCON is the acknowledged representative body of the UK and Republic of Ireland wooden pallet and packaging industry, encompassing manufacturers, the four major pallet pooling companies and the majority of sawmills who supply the industry from UK and Ireland and suppliers to the industry such as kiln and composite block manufacturers.
- TIMCON members manufacture 70 per cent of the UK's 43 million new pallets every year; they use around one million cubic metres of wood, representing between 25 and 30% of the UK's sawmilling production.
- The wooden packaging and pallet industry is a significant employer, which is crucial to the UK sawmill industry and forestry sector as a market for timber produced from small logs and falling boards from larger logs.

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