

# New Treated Wood Standard Change

- ❖ The American Wood Protection Association (AWPA) has changed the U1 standards for treated wood used in residential, agricultural and commercial applications. The AWPA Executive Committee stated the new standard change will become effective when the AWPA publishes the 2016 Book of Standards, which is typically in May or June each year. The AWPA Book of Standards states, “Standard U1 is the primary standard for specifiers, such as architects and engineers, but also for end users and building code officials. This Standard contains the information needed by specifiers in order to select a product that best suits their needs.”
- ❖ The new standard change will require that **Ground Contact (UC4A)** treated wood be used in the following end use applications:
  - Treated wood when installed less than 6” above the ground after final grade and landscaping.
  - When treated wood is used in an above ground application where the treated wood component would be considered difficult to maintain, repair or replace and that component is critical to the performance and safety of the structure. This standard change will affect joists and beams used in above ground decks and fresh water docks, including floating docks.
  - When treated wood is wetted on a frequent or recurring basis such as wind and wave action (such as fresh water docks and walkways) or watering systems, swimming pools and hot tubs.
  - When treated wood is used in tropical climates.
  - When treated wood is used in an application where vegetation, leaf litter, or other debris will build up and remain in contact with the treated wood product.
  - When treated wood is used in an application that does not permit air flow or circulation underneath the structure.
  - When treated wood is used where it is in direct contact with untreated wood or other wood products with any evidence of decay activity.
- ❖ Joists and Beams
  - **Ground Contact** treated joists and beams should be used on all Ground Level decks and walkways.
  - Joists and beams used in above ground decks and fresh water docks should be treated to **Ground Contact** because joists and beams are typically considered difficult to maintain, repair or replace and, by definition,\* are critical to the performance and safety of the structure.

❖ \*Definitions for Joists, Beams and Ledger Boards

- The proposal states that joists and beams shall be treated to **Ground Contact (UC4A)** when the wood is used in an above ground application where the component would be considered difficult to maintain, repair or replace and are critical to the performance and safety of the entire system/construction.

Examples: Joists and beams used in above ground decks and also fresh water docks, including floating docks should be treated to **Ground Contact**.

- Definitions:

**Joists**

- The *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction, Fourth Edition*, defines joists as, “A series of parallel beams of timber, reinforced concrete or steel used to support floor and ceiling loads, and supported in turn by larger beams.”
- *Decks.com* defines a joist as, “Joists are repeated structural members that are used to build a deck frame.”

**Beams**

- The *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction, Fourth Edition*, defines a beam as a, “Structural member whose prime function is to carry transverse loads such as a joist, girder or rafter.”
- *Decks.com* defines a beam as a, “Solid structural member that is supported by posts and footings that accepts and transfers the load from the joist.”

**Ledger Boards**

- The *Structural Building Components Association (SBCA)* defines a deck ledger board as a, “Horizontal lumber beam attached to an existing wall and used to tie in construction elements such as porch roofs and decks. A deck ledger is installed as part of the deck frame construction and supports one end of the deck joists.”
- *Dictionary.com* defines a ledger as, “A timber board fixed horizontally to studding to support floor joists.”

❖ Fresh Water Applications

- When treated wood is wetted on a frequent or recurring basis, all treated wood used in fresh water docks (including floating docks), piers and walkways should be treated to **Ground Contact**. This would include decking, joists and beams, cross bracing and other treated wood components.

- ❖ 2015 International Residential Code (IRC)
  - In Section R317.1, it states, *“Protection of wood and wood-based products from decay shall be provided in the following locations by the use of naturally durable wood or wood that is preservative-treated in accordance with AWPA U1 for the species, product, preservative and end use . . . .”*
  - The AWPA Proposal has changed the AWPA U1 Standard. The standard change affects both UC3B Above Ground (Exterior) and UC4A Ground Contact for treated wood products.
  - One of the new revisions to the AWPA U1 Standard will change deck and fresh water dock joists and beams to **Ground Contact**, because those components are typically considered difficult to maintain, repair or replace and are critical to the performance and safety of the structure.
  
- ❖ Treated Wood Warranties
  - Residential and Agricultural Limited Warranty for treated wood products will change to incorporate the new standard changes.
  - Some examples of changes include:
    - The warranty will not cover above ground treated products used within 6” of the ground.
    - The warranty will not cover above ground treated joists and beams for the majority of outdoor decks and fresh water docks.
    - The warranty will not cover above ground treated products used in an application where there is vegetation growth that contacts the treated wood.
    - The warranty will not cover above ground treated products used in an application where there is poor air circulation or water drainage below the structure that does not permit the wood to dry.
    - The warranty will not cover above ground treated products used in tropical climates.
  - The new warranty likely will become effective January 1, 2017.
  
- ❖ This summary is for informational purposes only. Please reference the 2016 AWPA Book of Standards when published. For additional information regarding the new standard change when passed and using ground contact treated wood in deck and dock construction, visit:
  - [www.awpa.com](http://www.awpa.com)
  - [www.icc-es.org](http://www.icc-es.org)
  - [www.kopperspc.com](http://www.kopperspc.com)
  - [www.nadra.org](http://www.nadra.org)
  - [www.southernpine.com](http://www.southernpine.com)
    - Pressure Treated Southern Pine Guide
    - Marine Construction Guide