

American Wood-Preservers' Association

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Wednesday, 03 May 2006

Jimmy L. Williams, Forest Resources Program Coordinator
Division of Plant Industries
Missouri Department of Agriculture
PO Box 630
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0630

RE: March 17, 2006 Request for Interpretation of AWPAs Standard A5, Method 5, Sections 7 and 8 (Determination of Chloride for Calculating Pentachlorophenol in Wood)

Dear Mr. Williams:

Pursuant to your request for interpretation of the above captioned AWPAs Standard, a panel consisting of Subcommittee P-5 Chair Paul Walcheski, Preservatives General Committee Chair Manfred Jung, and myself was formed to address your two questions. Our official responses follow.

“1. Is it acceptable for a laboratory to determine the level of treatment in PCF by calculating the sample based on weight (% x density factor) instead of volume and still be considered in compliance with method A5?”

Response: Standard A5, Method 5, Sections 7 and 8 each provide results in two possible units of measure: Pounds per cubic foot (PCF) or percent by weight. If the desired result is to be expressed as PCF, the Standard instructs the user to “record the volume of the sample in cubic inches as quantity Vs”. An optional method states, “If the results are desired in terms of weight percent, the weight of the sample should be determined to the nearest 0.001 grams and recorded as Ws”. Therefore, a strict interpretation of the Standard as written is that the sample volume must be used to determine the amount of pentachlorophenol in pounds per cubic foot, and the sample weight must be used to determine the percent of pentachlorophenol by weight. While it seems intuitive that one could easily calculate sample density and multiply it by the percent pentachlorophenol by weight, this additional step is not contained within Standard A5, Method 5 and would therefore not be considered in compliance.

“2. What is the acceptable method for determining the density factor on penta treated wood samples? (Specifically, how should the sample be dried, to what level of dryness, if it is dried at all?)”

Response: Standard A5, Method 5 does not require the calculation of wood density. Therefore, we cannot answer this question in terms of an interpretation of that particular method. In general, however, there are certain AWWA Analytical Standards, which do require the use of a wood density value. In most cases, the applicable analytical method instructs the user to either use the average density for an individual species or species grouping as listed in AWWA Standard A12, or to calculate the density based on sample weight and volume. If a method for calculating the density of the sample is specified, instructions for drying are generally included in the Standard. A good example of this is in Section 8 of AWWA Standard A9.

We sincerely hope that this response addresses the two questions to your satisfaction. If you believe that the Standard is still unclear and requires further discussion, you may request that an item be placed on the agenda of the next Subcommittee P-5 meeting to discuss this issue. Whether you choose to request placement on the agenda or not, a copy of this interpretation shall be submitted by AWWA to Subcommittee P-5 for their review. You may also review the Standard and propose any change which makes the Standard easier to understand or use. A form for such a proposal is found on the AWWA website. Any suggestions which improve the quality of AWWA Standards are always appreciated.

On behalf of Subcommittee P-5 Chair Paul Walcheski and Preservatives General Committee Chair Manfred Jung, I thank you for your continued support of AWWA.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin McCown', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Colin McCown, Executive Vice President
American Wood-Preservers' Association