

Treated Wood: Identify Before Cutting

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Why this matters

Treated wood can contain different preservatives. Before cutting, drilling, sanding or disposing of it, establish what information covers the actual material and how the resulting dust and waste will be controlled.

Objective: Match material information to the task and verify controls before disturbance.

Key hazards or failure points

Unknown treatment; mixed recovered wood; airborne dust; contaminated hands; unsuitable PPE; ineffective collection; treated waste entering clean recycling or fuel streams.

Practical controls

- Use available product tags, purchase records and supplier information to identify the treatment. The responsible person resolves unknown material and the required work method before disturbance.
- Select dust controls and protective equipment for the actual material and task. Follow equipment instructions and applicable exposure and respiratory-protection requirements; an ordinary mask is not automatic clearance.
- Provide appropriate handwashing, collection and waste handling. Keep treated waste out of unapproved mulch or fuel streams. Confirm the permitted destination before producing dust and offcuts.

Verify It in the Field

Match records and available SDS information to the wood being used. Record the identification basis and its limits. Color, age or appearance alone does not establish the treatment or prove wood is untreated.

Check the selected dust-control setup and prescribed functional checks before cutting. Confirm attachments, collection and maintenance match the procedure. Vacuum noise or no visible dust does not establish acceptable exposure.

Confirm accessible washing facilities and the planned handling of dust, offcuts and contaminated items. Verify that the destination accepts this waste under applicable requirements. Record unresolved identification or disposal questions.

Stop and reassess

Hold disturbance for unknown treatment, mismatched information, failed dust control or an unconfirmed waste route. Reassess a different batch or recovered material. Do not burn scraps, improvise disposal or select a respirator by guesswork to keep the task moving.

Ask the crew

1. What evidence identifies this wood's treatment?
2. Which check shows our selected dust control is ready?
3. Where is this waste authorized to go?

Material and task planning; not exposure clearance or waste classification.

Sources: EPA CCA guidance; OSHA May 3, 2023 interpretation and HazCom.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/treated-wood-cutting-disposal-check