Treated Wood: Tips for Durable Exterior Wood Construction

Key Point	Don't, for example:	Do:
Not all treated wood is suitable for all uses.	Use in ground contact wood treated for above ground uses.	Consult the end tag when buying treated wood.
Alkaline copper quat (ACQ) and copper azole (CA) were developed for residential uses.	Confuse these treatments with CCA, which is now used mainly for industrial applications.	Read the consumer safety information. Note quats are used in disinfectant and azoles in athletes foot cream.
Copper-based wood preservatives and cedar extractives, are corrosive	Use mild steel or electroplated galvanized fasteners and connectors.	Specify appropriate corrosion-resistant fasteners and connectors.
Not all preservatives are suitable for all applications.	Specify borates for use outdoors unprotected from rain, or specify creosote for indoors.	Refer to the CSA O80 series of standards for guidance.
CSA O80 standards cover a wide range of commodities for different uses with different decay risk.	Simply specify treatment to CSA O80.	Specify the Use Category and the appropriate as listed in Table 2 of CSA O80.1
Only for specific applications listed in the NBCC does wood have to be treated to CSA O80	Expect all wood in the lumber yard to be treated to CSA O80 standards.	Specify third-party quality assurance if you need material that does meet CSA O80 standards.
Most Canadian wood species are resistant to pressure treatment. The part that will get wet in service will also absorb pressure treatment.	Specify Douglas-fir for everything because it is strong.	Specify treatable wood species where appropriate.
	Waive requirements for incising for ground contact applications.	Specify incised (perforated) lumber for ground contact.
	Expect treatment to penetrate all the way through.	Take note of long-term data on wood with shell treatment.
Preservative treatment provides a protective shell. The wood inside the shell is vulnerable if exposed.	Make cuts, daps or drill holes in pressure-treated wood and leave them unprotected.	Cut and drill before treatment if possible. Brush-treat cuts or holes made on site.
	Cut tops of treated wood posts to level and leave exposed	Cut, field treat and add a cap or cut at an angle and treat and cover with flashing or board
Wood treated to standard with field-treated cuts can last 30 to 60 years.	Expect treated wood structures to be replaced in a few years.	Design treated wood structures with a view to the long term.
Preservative treatment is designed to stop decay and termite attack, not to stop cracking and splitting due to repeated wetting and drying.	Expect all woods to withstand repeated wetting and drying without splitting and cracking.	Specify stable species where appearance is important. Use profiled decking. Use hidden fasteners to reduce end splits.
	Expect preservative treatment to prevent splits and cracks.	Apply a compatible stain once wood dries, and then regularly as required.
Treated wood can often be re-used in secondary applications.	Dispose of treated wood without considering potential for re-use.	Re-use treated wood from dismantled structures where appropriate.

For more detailed information see www.durable-wood.com

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