

# The Buyer's Guide to Preservative Treated Wood

Preservative treatment provides wood with added durability. However, it's a mistake to assume that all pressure treated wood is the same. Whilst one piece of treated wood may look very much like any other, the level of preservative protection could be very different. That's because national technical standards for wood preservation require that the loading and penetration of preservative, impregnated into the wood, is tailored to the desired end use.

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**Make  
sure  
it's** **4**  
Use Class 4  
GROUND CONTACT

The WPA Code of Practice for Industrial Wood Preservation (January 2021) groups the applications for treated wood into Use Classes, the main three being:

INTERIOR	EXTERIOR	
<b>Use Class 2</b>	<b>Use Class 3(u)</b>	<b>Use Class 4</b>
<b>Above the ground or DPC, covered</b>	<b>Above the ground (uncoated)</b>	<b>Ground or fresh water contact (and exterior structural support)</b>
Internal construction timbers within the building envelope: Tiling battens, framing and roof timbers, internal joists, sole plates.	External construction timbers: Deck boards, fence rails and boards, cladding (including battens) and fascias.	External construction timbers: Fence posts, agricultural timbers, retaining walls, playground equipment, decking posts, joists and beams.



### Find an accredited supplier

The WPA administers a series of Quality Approval Schemes which cover timber treatment formulations, processes and products – providing valid independent assessment and verification.

To find suppliers of treated timber certificated under the **WPA Benchmark** preservative treated wood (TW) scheme, visit: [www.thewpa.org.uk/member-products-services](http://www.thewpa.org.uk/member-products-services)



## Check List

### Buying and Using Preservative Treated Wood



**DO** establish the Use Class of the timber you need, before ordering.



**DO** tell your supplier in writing, that the wood must be treated to that particular Use Class to comply with BS 8417.



**DO** ask your supplier to verify that the wood supplied meets your Use Class specification – on the delivery note and invoice or a treatment certificate.  
When buying from stock always check which Use Class the wood has been treated to.



**DO NOT** substitute wood that has been treated for an indoor application for use in an external application – failure is inevitable.



For wood in permanent ground or fresh water contact, or providing exterior structural support, Use Class 4 levels of protection **MUST** be achieved. Anything less and service life, structural safety and customer satisfaction will be compromised.



**DO NOT** supply wood that has been treated for external use for what you know will only be internal applications.

Fitness for purpose works both ways – unnecessary overtreatment is no more best practice than under treatment. Buy and sell the right product for the job.

Use Class 3 treated wood is unnecessary for internal use and is not superior to Use Class 2 material for that application.



When cross cutting, notching or boring treated timber products during installation, **ALWAYS** apply an end grain preservative treatment to freshly exposed areas – to maintain the integrity of the protection. **NEVER** put cut ends in the ground, even if end grain coated.

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For further information or advice, please contact either :

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