

Critical ISPM 15 Revisions Update

European Union Bark Restriction is Adopted Globally

The previously announced European Union bark restriction changes have prompted the adoption of more restrictive bark regulations internationally. The International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 15 (ISPM 15) has been revised to include a debarking rule that did not previously exist in the standard. *Note: the term “bark free” as it applied to earlier updates has changed to “debarked.”*

ISPM 15 Enforcement Timeline

The ALSC (American Lumber Standard Committee), which oversees the US heat treating program, has suggested that its certification agencies implement the new changes as soon as possible. This change has already occurred with Timber Creek Resource’s certification agency, Timber Products. Therefore, all IPPC stamped wood packaging material leaving Timber Creek Resource is already being debarked and heat treated to the new ISPM standards. Because Timber Creek Resource must immediately conform to these new regulations, so too must all of our customers.

The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), which oversees the ISPM 15 standard, allows each member country to decide the timeline for enforcement of rule changes. There is neither a phase-in period nor a specific date these ISPM 15 revisions are to take effect. Technically, this means that all ISPM 15 countries could immediately require the new debarked standard. According to the Timber Products certification agency, the ISPM 15 exemption between the US and Canada is still in effect; no date has been announced as to when this exemption will expire.

While some of the ISPM 15 changes also affect Australia and New Zealand, these countries already enforce a greater bark restriction sighting “a ZERO tolerance for bark”. Wood packaging material shipping to Australia or New Zealand must be Bark Free, which is defined by AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) below.

Bark Restriction Clarification

The definition of debarked wood is provided below:

*“Irrespective of the type of treatment applied, wood packaging material must be made of **debarked wood**. For this standard, any number of visually separate and clearly distinct small pieces of bark may remain if they are: - less than 3 cm in width (regardless of the length) or - greater than 3 cm in width, with the total surface area of an individual piece of bark less than 50 square cm.”* [per the [Revised ISPM 15](#) Annex 1]

The definition of bark free wood is provided below:

*“In addition to ISPM15 requirements, AQIS also has a ZERO tolerance for bark on timber packaging and dunnage. Bark is the external natural growth layer covering trees and branches. All timber, solid wood packaging and timber products imported to Australia must be **BARK FREE**. AQIS acknowledges that bark around knots, bark pockets between rings of annual growth, and inclusions in the vascular cambium are difficult to remove. However these have the potential to harbor quarantine risk materials such as fungal spores, fungal decays and insects.”* [per Australia’s [AQIS Website](#)]

For more clarification and photographs of representative samples that meet the various requirements, go to the [Bark Restriction page on our website](#).