

Studies Provide Public With Updated Information on CCA-Treated Playground and Decks

EPA and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) are providing updated information on the effectiveness of sealants and stains in reducing potential exposure to arsenic from chromated copper arsenate (CCA)-treated wood used in residential settings. For homeowners and others who want to reduce their potential arsenic exposure from their decks or other CCA-treated wood structures, new studies show that use, at least once a year, of an oil- or water-based, penetrating sealant or stain can reduce arsenic migrating from the treated wood. The data show that oil- or water-based sealants or stains that can penetrate wood surfaces are preferable to products such as paint, because paints and other film-formers can chip or flake, requiring scraping or sanding for removal, which can increase exposure to arsenic. Consumers should consider the required preparation steps (e.g., sanding, power washing, etc.) before selecting a product to minimize potential exposure to arsenic, both for initial application and re-coating.

This information is based on first-year results from two-year studies initiated by CPSC and EPA in 2003 to determine which stains, sealants and paints are most effective in reducing potential arsenic exposure from existing CCA-treated structures. EPA tested the performance of 12 coatings on older wood and CPSC tested eight coatings (seven were the same as the EPA group) on new (as of August 2003) CCA-treated wood. CCA was a pesticide treatment commonly used in the past to prevent deck and playground wood from rotting and insect damage. Effective Dec. 31, 2003, the use of CCA to treat virtually all wood intended for residential use was eliminated. More information for consumers and the sealant studies are available on:

EPA's Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca/#sealants>

CPSC's Web site: <http://www.cpsc.gov/whatsnew.html>

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