



California Senate Bill 68 Treated Wood Waste Disposal Fact Sheet

Treated wood is a commonly used material in construction, infrastructure, agriculture, transportation and aquatic applications where exposure to moisture, insects or other elements compromise the wood's strength and useful life. Wood products are treated with preservatives reviewed and registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The wood preserving industry has been a leader in promoting the proper handling and proper disposal of treated wood waste.

Senate Bill 68 will continue existing procedures and reporting for treated wood waste. The original legislation, California [AB 1353](#) (Matthews, 2004), ended a variance system for disposing treated wood waste (TWW) and provided for its lawful disposal through alternative management standards and reporting requirements. AB 1353 required generators to sort treated wood from untreated wood waste, file reports for tracking with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and dispose TWW in a Class II or Class II composite-lined landfill approved by the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Since 2005, disposing treated wood waste anywhere other than a composite-lined landfill or Class I hazardous waste landfill has been prohibited by law.

The law also requires TWW generators to separate treated wood waste from other waste prior to disposal and report the amount of material disposed. Common generators of TWW include public works departments, landfills, parks, ports, railroads, transportation agencies, schools, universities, industrial facilities, manufacturers, construction companies, fence and decking contractors, agriculture enterprises and private residences.

A TWW generator site is any location where treated wood is cut, sanded or drilled. Remnants from these activities, including the sawdust, are considered TWW and must be sorted, reported and disposed in a composite-lined landfill. Treated wood coming out of service also must be lawfully disposed in the same manner.

The law requires landfills and transfer stations to submit semi-annual reports on the TWW they receive. The state DTSC regulates TWW disposal and in 2007 launched a Treated Wood Waste Tracking System to better understand the volume of TWW received by approved facilities throughout California and to improve compliance through outreach and education.

Signage directing consumers to employ safe handling and lawful disposal practices posted at wholesale and retail lumber outlets is required under current law. Originally, the signage referenced a toll-free number that consumers could call to obtain more information on disposing TWW. The current signage directs TWW generators to the website www.PreservedWood.org for more information.

A smartphone application also is available that provides information on preserved wood, including its disposal.

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Each of the previous bills included sunset provisions, which required reauthorizations to continue the regulations. AB 1353 was reauthorized in 2011 ([SB 909](#)) and again in 2015 ([SB 162](#)).

In addition to continuing the existing regulations, SB 162 mandated the DTSC conduct a study and provide a report to the state legislature assessing compliance with the statute and regulations as a precursor to making permanent the program and removing the sunset provision. An appropriation of \$370,000 was provided for the study, with the report due to the legislature on July 1, 2018. DTSC has yet to issue the report.

Composite-lined landfills must be approved to accept TWW by the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board. According to a 2013 list published on [DTSC's website](#) (the most recent available), there are 45 landfills accepting TWW in California.

End tags affixed to preserved wood products aid consumers in understanding the intended application for each product to ensure proper handling and disposal.

Preserved wood helps ensure the sustainability of California's forests by protecting the wood long enough for a new tree to grow to replace it. Preserved wood is critical to California's infrastructure for transportation including railroads, highways and ports. Treated wood utility poles serve as the foundation of the energy and communications systems linking California's more than 40 million people.

Most people don't realize that preserved wood is the first board installed in every house to protect the rest of the wood used in the structure. A little preservative goes a long way in helping to sustain our environment and provide goods and infrastructure for our communities.