Preservative-Treated Wood and the 2013 California Building Code

The California Building Code recognizes the problems inherent in certain applications and the effectiveness of properly treated wood in enduring those situations. For some applications, the code requires treated wood; for others it allows either pressure-treated wood or a wood classified as naturally resistant to decay. The following excerpts are references to treated wood taken from the 2013 California Building Code.

Chapter 23 — WOOD

SECTION 2303
STANDARDS OF QUALITY

2303.1.8 Preservative-treated wood.
Lumber, timber, plywood, piles and poles supporting permanent structures required by Section 2304.11 to be preservative treated shall conform to the requirements of the applicable AWPA Standard U1 and M4 for the species, product, preservative and end use. Preservatives shall be listed in Section 4 of AWPA U1. Lumber and plywood used in wood foundation systems shall conform to Chapter 18.

2303.1.8.1 Identification.
Wood required by Section 2304.11 to be preservative treated shall bear the quality mark of an inspection agency that maintains continuing supervision, testing and inspection over the quality of the preservative-treated wood. Inspection agencies for preservative-treated wood shall be listed by the American Lumber Standards Treated Wood Program, or equivalent. The quality mark shall be on a stamp or label affixed to the treated wood, and shall include the following information:

1. Identification of treating manufacturer.
2. Type of preservative used.
3. Minimum preservative retention (pcf).
4. End use for which the product is treated.
5. AWPA standard to which the product was treated.
6. Identity of the accredited inspection agency.

2303.1.8.2 Moisture content.
Where preservative-treated wood is used in enclosed locations where drying in service cannot readily occur, such wood shall be at a moisture content of 19 percent or less before being covered with insulation, interior wall finish, floor covering or other materials.

2304.9.5 Fasteners and connectors in contact with preservative-treated and fire-retardant-treated wood.
Fasteners, including nuts and washers, and connectors in contact with preservative-treated and fire-retardant-treated wood shall be in accordance with Sections 2304.9.5.1 through 2304.9.5.4. The coating weights for zinc-coated fasteners shall be in accordance with ASTM A 153.

2304.9.5.1 Fasteners and connectors for preservative-treated wood.
Fasteners, including nuts and washers, in contact with preservative-treated wood shall be of hot-dipped zinc-coated galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper. Fasteners other than nails, timber rivets, wood screws and lag screws shall be permitted to be of mechanically deposited zinc-coated steel with coating weights in accordance with ASTM B 695, Class 55 minimum. Connectors that are used in exterior applications and in contact with preservative-treated wood shall have coating types and weights in accordance with the treated wood or connector manufacturer’s recommendations. In the absence of manufacturer’s recommendations, a minimum of ASTM A 653, type G185 zinc-coated galvanized steel, or equivalent, shall be used.

Exception: Plain carbon steel fasteners in SBX/DOT and zinc borate preservative-treated wood in an interior, dry environment shall be permitted.

2304.9.5.2 Fastenings for wood foundations.
Fastenings, including nuts and washers, for wood foundations shall be as required in AF&PA PWF.

SECTION 2304.11
PROTECTION AGAINST DECAY AND TERMITES

2304.11.1 General.
Where required by this section, protection from decay and termites shall be provided by the use of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.2 Wood used above ground.
Wood used above ground in the locations specified in Sections 2304.11.2.1 through 2304.11.2.7, 2304.11.3 and 2304.11.5 shall be naturally durable wood or preservative-treated wood using water-borne preservatives, in accordance with AWPA U1 (Commodity Specifications A or F) for above-ground use.

2304.11.2.1 Joists, girders and subfloor.
Where wood joists or the bottom of a wood structural floor without joists are closer than 18 inches (457 mm), or wood girders are closer than 12 inches (305 mm) to the exposed ground in crawl spaces or unexcavated areas located within the perimeter of the building foundation, the floor construction (including posts, girders and subfloor) shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.2.1.1 [SPCB]
There shall be a clearance of at least 18 inches (457 mm) between the underside of wood floor joists and the finished surface of the ground, and at least 12 inches (305 mm) between the underside of any other wood horizontal framing member and the finished surface of the ground. The ground underneath floor joists shall be leveled or smoothed off so as to maintain a reasonably even surface.

Exception: For purposes of structural pest control inspection, a minimum of 12 inches (305 mm) of clearance under-floor joists shall be considered adequate except that such clearance shall not be necessary where the subarea soil is of such a nature as to prevent excavation or where excavation would create a hazard from shifting soil or other causes.

2304.11.2.2 Wood supported by exterior foundation walls.
Wood framing members, including wood sheathing, that rest on exterior foundation walls and are less than 8 inches (203 mm) from exposed earth shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

Exception: [DSA-SS and OSHPD 1, 2 & 4] At exterior walls where the earth is paved with an asphalt or concrete slab at least 18 inches (457 mm) wide and draining away from the building, the bottom of sills are permitted to be 6 inches (152 mm) above the top of such slab. Other equivalent means of termite and decay protection may be accepted by the enforcement agency.

(continued on back)
2304.11.2.3 Exterior walls below grade. Wood framing members and furring strips attached directly to the interior of exterior masonry or concrete walls below grade shall be of approved naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.2.4 Sleepers and sills. Sleepers and sills on a concrete or masonry slab that is in direct contact with earth shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.2.4.1 Additional requirements. [DSA-SS and OSHPD 1, 2 & 4] Stud walls or partitions at shower or toilet rooms with more than two fixtures, and stud walls adjacent to unroofed paved areas shall rest on a concrete curb extending at least 6 inches (152 mm) above finished floor or pavement level.

2304.11.2.5 Girder Ends. The ends of wood girders entering exterior masonry or concrete walls shall be provided with a 1/2-inch (12.7 mm) air space on top, sides and end, unless naturally durable or preservative-treated wood is used.

2304.11.2.6 Wood siding. Clearance between wood siding and earth on the exterior of a building shall not be less than 6 inches (152 mm) or less than 2 inches (51 mm) vertical from concrete steps, porch slabs, patio slabs and similar horizontal surfaces exposed to the weather except where siding, sheathing and wall framing are of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.2.7 Posts or columns. Posts or columns supporting permanent structures and supported by a concrete or masonry slab or footing that is in direct contact with the earth shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

Exceptions: 1. Posts or columns that are either exposed to the weather or located in basements or cellars, supported by concrete piers or metal pedestals projected at least 1 inch (25 mm) above the slab or deck and 6 inches (152 mm) above exposed earth, and are separated therefrom by an impervious moisture barrier.

2. Posts or columns in enclosed crawl spaces or unexcavated areas located within the periphery of the building, supported by a concrete pier or metal pedestal at a height greater than 8 inches (203 mm) from exposed ground, and are separated therefrom by an impervious moisture barrier.

2304.11.2.8 Separate wood framing. [SPCB] Correct the conditions in frame and stucco walls and similar appurtenant construction so that the wood framing is separate from the main structure by a complete concrete or masonry plug with no voids that will allow infestations to enter the structure from the wall. If there is no plug, the foundation shall be 2 inches (51 mm) or more above the grade levels and at least as high as the adjoining slabs or 4-inch (102 mm) concrete barrier seat off installed.

2304.11.3 Laminated timbers. The portions of glued-laminated timbers that form the structural supports of a building or other structure and are exposed to weather and not fully protected from moisture by a roof, eave or similar covering shall be pressure treated with preservative or be manufactured from naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.4 Wood in contact with the ground or fresh water. Wood used in contact with the ground (exposed earth) in the locations specified in Sections 2304.11.4.1 and 2304.11.4.2 shall be naturally durable (species for both decay and termite resistance) or preservative treated using waterborne preservatives in accordance with AWPA U1 (Commodity Specifications A or F) for soil or fresh water use.

Exception: Untreated wood is permitted where such wood is continuously and entirely below the ground-water level or submerged in fresh water.

2304.11.4.1 Posts or columns. Posts and columns supporting permanent structures that are embedded in concrete that is in direct contact with the earth, embedded in concrete that is exposed to the weather or in direct contact with the earth shall be of preservative-treated wood.

2304.11.4.2 Wood structural members. Wood structural members that support moisture-permeable floors or roofs that are exposed to the weather, such as concrete or masonry slabs, shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood unless separated from such floors or roofs by an impervious moisture barrier.

2304.11.5 Supporting member for permanent appurtenances. Naturally durable or preservative-treated wood shall be utilized for those portions of wood members that form the structural supports of buildings, balconies, porches or similar permanent building appurtenances where such members are exposed to the weather without adequate protection from a roof, eave, overhang or other covering to prevent moisture or water accumulation on the surface or at joints between members.

Exception: When a building is located in a geographical region where experience has demonstrated that climatic conditions preclude the need to use durable materials where the structure is exposed to the weather.

2304.11.6 Termite protection. In geographical areas where hazard of termite damage is known to be heavy, wood floor framing in locations specified in Section 2304.11.2.1 and exposed framing of exterior decks or balconies shall be of naturally durable species (termite resistant) or preservative treated in accordance with AWPA U1 for the species, product preservative and end use or provided with approved methods of termite protection.

2304.11.7 Wood used in retaining walls and cribs. Wood installed in retaining or crib walls shall be preservative treated in accordance with AWPA U1 (Commodity Specifications A or F) for soil and fresh water use.

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**TREATING STANDARDS**

<table>
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<th>APPLICATION</th>
<th>RETENTION LBS./CU. FT.</th>
<th>AWPA USE CATEGORY STANDARDS FOR STRUCTURAL APPLICATIONS</th>
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<td>ACQ/ACZA</td>
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<td>Above Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground Contact, Fresh Water Immersion</td>
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<td>In Ground (Structural)</td>
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