

February 23, 2004

To our valued customer:

In response to your recent inquiry regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's recent ban on the use of Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) as a preservative for wood intended for certain uses, including residential construction, we would like to advise you as follows.

While CCA treated lumber may still be available for commercial use, it is likely that many producers will convert existing CCA processing facilities to handle new products treated with Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ) and Copper Azole, which are the two primary preservatives taking the place of CCA. Both of these preservatives are water borne compounds and it is claimed that they offer adequate toxicity to insects and prevent molds and rots as effectively as CCA.

To make the new preservatives effective, the copper content is dramatically greater than in CCA. Unfortunately, this increase in copper makes the new treated lumber likely to be much more corrosive to carbon steel fasteners with currently available platings and coatings. This is rapidly becoming a major concern in the planning for metal attachments to the new ACQ treated lumber. Electroplated galvanized or mechanically zinc plated fasteners may not offer enough protection to the base material of the fastener in the ACQ treated wood. This will depend heavily on the degree of moisture in the lumber. We know that even extremely corrosive compounds are not necessarily a problem without the introduction of moisture. Unfortunately, most treated lumber is very moist by nature, and even condensation due to heat transfer differentials between wood and steel make it virtually impossible to assure dryness. This may result in a significant galvanic reaction between the copper in the preservative solution and the plated carbon steel fastener. Further corrosion concerns are brought about by the presence of sodium in the solution.

While we are of the opinion that there is a risk of corrosion for any carbon steel fastener in any moist lumber, because of the very minimal experience that exists with this new ACQ treated lumber, we are especially concerned about the likelihood of corrosion in ACQ materials.

**SFS INTEC, INC. DOES NOT SPECIFY A PARTICULAR USE OR APPLICATION FOR ITS PRODUCTS AND URGES ITS CUSTOMERS TO EXERCISE THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT IN BUILDING AND APPLICATION DECISIONS. HOWEVER, IT IS OUR FIRM RECOMMENDATION THAT AUSTENITIC STAINLESS STEEL FASTENERS AND MATERIAL BE USED FOR ALL MOIST LUMBER APPLICATIONS AND ESPECIALLY IN ACQ MATERIAL APPLICATIONS.**

SFS intec, Inc. is committed to conducting extensive research to quantify the long-term effects of these new treatments on coated carbon steel fastener performance. We intend to utilize all of the technical resources available to us through our research facilities in Heerbrugg, Switzerland to complete definitive studies on this important issue. We will compare existing as well as new carbon steel coatings for resistance to the corrosive effects of ACQ. We will also quantify the relative benefits of other materials including austenitic and martensitic steels. We will publish the results of our analysis as they become available. For specific questions on this important matter, please feel free to call us at (800) 234-4533.

Very truly yours



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