



Solid Wood Packing Materials to China: Questions and Answers

Plant Protection and Quarantine
January 19, 2000

UPDATES ARE IN RED!

Q: When are the new Chinese solid wood packing materials regulations effective?

A: On November 1, 1999, China officially announced emergency quarantine regulations effective January 1, 2000.

Q: What will the regulation affect?

A: The regulation will impact all shipments leaving the United States for China beginning January 1, 2000. The State Administration for Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (SAIQ) will require specific certification concerning SWPM, including bracing and dunnage, with all shipments leaving a US port on or after January 01, 2000.

However, in recognition of the potential for a degree of unintentional non-compliance, China is granting a 60-day period of operational flexibility. **OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY IS NOT A GRACE PERIOD.** Operational flexibility means that goods exported to China from the United States without a proper statement of the nature of packing materials will not be returned to the United States or destroyed. But the proper certificate should be issued as soon as possible, and any storage fees will be paid by the exporter. Local inspection and quarantine agencies will be given some discretion in the implementation during this period, and will also have the authority to deal with violations and assess fines for companies that fail to present the proper certificate within a reasonable time frame.

Q: Who should I contact for additional information?

A: Additional questions should be directed to the USDA-APHIS-PPQ Office in the most immediate proximity to the U.S. Exporter. An internet listing of USDA-APHIS-PPQ Offices can be found at the following website address: www.aphis.usda.gov/travel/aqi.

Q: What will be required?

A: Exporters must self-certify all shipments to China if no solid wood packing material is present or if the solid wood packing material is other than conifer wood. Exporters should place one of the following certifying statements on their company letterhead. This statement should accompany the Invoice or Bill of Lading. As an added precaution, exporters may also prominently place the same certifying statement on the Invoice and/or Bill of Lading. Additionally, Chinese officials have provided the language that their import employees will be looking for on separate paper. This language can be used in addition to these self-certifying statements. The additional Chinese documentation is not required but will assist them in their clearance activities. Please be aware that local Chinese port officers are requesting these documents even though they are not required. .

Your shipment contains...

Then you need...

No Solid Wood Packing
Materials

- The statement "THIS SHIPMENT CONTAINS NO SOLID WOOD PACKING MATERIAL." on the Bill of Lading and/or invoice.
- [Chinese declaration of no wood packing material](#) as additional certification to statements. Just click and print.

Solid Wood Packing Materials
Made with Wood Other than
Conifer

- The statement "THE SOLID WOOD PACKING MATERIAL IN THIS SHIPMENT IS NOT CONIFEROUS WOOD." on the Bill of Lading and/or invoice.
- [Chinese declaration of non-coniferous wood packing material](#) as additional certification to statements. Just click and print.

If the shipment does contain coniferous solid wood packing material USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) must certify that the conifer wood packing material in the shipment has been heat treated.

Q: How will APHIS provide this certification?

APHIS has developed a new form and is developing regulations to certify that all conifer packing material that is in a shipment going to China has been heat treated. The exporter will certify that the solid wood packing material has been heat treated according to the established rules. APHIS will endorse the Certificate of Heat Treatment that the conifer wood in the shipment has been heat treated. The Certificate of Heat Treatment must accompany the shipment. The new form and regulations are designed to have minimal impact on trade. The Certificate of Heat Treatment form is available on our web site at, www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/chinaswp/hotbutton

Exporters submitting this form must use a U.S. street address. Consignee's address should be a Chinese or Hong Kong address.

Q: What is conifer wood?

A: Conifer wood is wood that comes from "...predominately evergreen, cone-bearing trees, such as pine, spruce, hemlock, or fir."

Q: What is SWPM?

A: SWPM (solid wood packing material) as defined by APHIS (7CFR 319.40-1) is: "Wood packing materials, other than loose wood packing materials, used or for use with cargo to prevent damage, including, but not limited to, dunnage, crating, pallets, packing blocks, drums, cases, spools, and skids." Most of the wood used for shipping to China meets the definition of SWPM and will be subject to the requirements.

Q: What is not SWPM?

A: SWPM does not include synthetic or highly processed wood materials used as packing materials. These articles (e.g. plywood, oriented strand board, corrugated paperboard, plastic, and resin composites), while subject to certification, are not subject to the heat treatment requirement.

Q: What is heat treatment?

A: Heat treatment, as defined by the regulations, is wood that has been heated to a core temperature of 56 degrees Celsius (133 F) for 30 minutes. Kiln drying often meets this requirement. However, exporters need to verify that the kiln drying process used meets the Chinese standard of 56 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes.

Q: Is pressure-treated wood or fumigation acceptable?

A: At this time, China will only accept heat treatments, other treatments such as fumigation and pressure treatments do not meet the Chinese standard.

Q: How would the heat treatment be certified by APHIS?

A: APHIS must be able to determine that the conifer wood used has been properly treated. Exporters must know and have documentation that the conifer wood in their shipment has been properly heat treated. Based on this, exporters will certify the heat treatment on the Certificate of Heat Treatment, PPQ Form 553. APHIS will use the exporters certification as a basis to provide their endorsement. Documentation of heat treatment must be made available for official review (if required) for one (1) year after date of issuance.

Q: How long will certificates and certifying documents be retained?

A: Exporters will be required to maintain a copy of the Certificate of Heat Treatment and all documents which support the certification for one year. APHIS will audit or review the exporters records containing heat treatment documents which support the certifying statement. These records will be made available, upon request, to APHIS personnel for the audit/review process.

Q: Would transit shipments be affected? What about mixed loads?

A: Sealed shipments transiting "in bond" through the United States to foreign destinations should not be affected by this regulation. Loads of mixed origin would have to be properly certified.

Q: Are shipments to Hong Kong affected by this new regulation?

A: This applies only to shipments destined to China. For example, if a shipment is transiting Hong Kong destined to China, these requirements should be met. If a shipment is destined only to Hong Kong, there is no change. However, if the U.S. exporter feels the shipment's final destination is China, then APHIS would encourage the exporter to obtain the Certificate of Heat Treatment before leaving the United States. In this case, the Consignee's Hong Kong address on the Certificate of Heat Treatment would be acceptable.

Q: Are shipments to Taiwan, Japan, Korea, or other countries affected by this new regulation?

A: This applies only to shipments destined to China. If a shipment is being sent to China via a third country, then APHIS would encourage the exporter to obtain a Certificate of Heat Treatment before leaving the United States. However, the APHIS official would require the name and address of the Chinese consignee prior to endorsement of the Certificate.

Q: What happens if I fail to properly certify my shipment?

A: China has indicated that improperly certified shipments are subject to one of three actions:

1. The shipment can be returned to origin.
2. The shipment can be separated from the packing material, at the importer's expense. The packing material would be destroyed.
3. If the shipment cannot be separated from the packing material and is not returned to origin, then both the shipment and packing material would be destroyed.

Q: What if my certificate is not accepted by Chinese officials?

A: If your Certificate of Heat Treatment is not accepted, you should contact the office that endorsed your certificate.

Q: Is China alone in the world in setting requirements such as these?

A: No, there is a growing list of countries, including the United States, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia, concerned about and regulating for wood-borne pests. In December 1998, APHIS published regulations for SWPM from China due to concerns about the Asian longhorned beetle. In January 1999, APHIS published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding SWPM from all countries. The European Union has regulated pine lumber from the United States for the pinewood nematode for many years.

Q: Is the United States the only country regulated for the pine wood nematode?

A: No, parallel regulations are to go into effect for Japan (China's largest trading partner) at the same time.

Q: Why has China felt it necessary to establish this regulation?

A: China's Ministry of Agriculture had previously included pinewood nematode in a list of harmful pests they wished excluded from their country. The pinewood nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophyllus*) has been introduced into parts of China and is reportedly causing significant damage to some of its conifer forests. Because the pinewood nematode is established in the United States, China has issued this regulation in an effort to prevent further introductions into their country.

Q: What is left to be done?

A: APHIS continues to work with exporters and the Chinese government to ensure minimal disruptions to trade. We hope China will show some flexibility in the implementation and enforcement of this new requirement to allow U.S. exporters to comply.

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