

A BASIC GUIDELINE ON THE TREATMENT PROCEDURE WHEN EXPORTING WOODEN PRODUCTS

By: Nicholas Prince



Most of us know them, we often come across them; those little holes that seem to be evident in most, if not all types of wood of the homes and the gardens of properties.

From carpenter bees boring into edges of eaves and branderings (also known as battens) of roofs, to shot hole borers of the Bostrychid family all the way to the more commonly experienced and seen *Hylotrupes Bajulus* (Italian Beetle) and *Lyctus Brunneus* (Powder Post Beetle).

So, what does this have to do with the topic of discussion? Well, all those wood borers also get into wood that gets exported, and as much as this country needs to export goods to boost the country's economy, it is not needed to export borer with those commodities. Our export partners are not thrilled to be receiving these insects as part of their consignments. It also breaks a whole lot of regulations relating to wood treatments.

As such, certain guidelines have been put in place to prevent, or at least severely limit, sending those little critters to all extremities of the world from the ports of South Africa. What follows would constitute a basic and simple outline required for the export of wooden products. **This does not include the ISPM15 regulations (Crates, dunnage, or pallets), which can be covered on a different day.** It applies to wooden articles such as but not limited to: wooden fruit bowls, African artefacts and wooden curios, picture frames, chairs, coffee tables and the like. Remember too, that there are certain items that cannot be treated with Methyl Bromide: leather products, oil paintings, animal skins and hides would fall into this category. These require a different treatment to achieve the same result.

Fumigations of shipping containers are specific and controlled and should be done as follows: The container should be packed with the items that will be shipped, fumigated at the correct dosage as listed below. The container should

then be sealed and left for the appropriate time (between 24 and 48 hours depending on the borer being treated).

When doing fumigations one needs to have the correct monitoring systems in place. Once the gas has been completely introduced and that part completed, then the container closed, a halide detector should be used in different areas around the outside of the container to be sure of no leaks from the container, (the container should also have been checked for leakage prior to starting the fumigation). The gas concentration should be monitored 2 hours, 4 hours, and 24 after introduction of gas to ensure consistency of concentration.

Then the container should be opened again and be allowed to ventilate for a period of 4 to 6 hours. After this time the container can be closed and sealed with the shipping seal. From here it gets loaded on the transport truck or train and sent to the harbour where it gets loaded onto the vessel and shipped off to the country of destination.

During the fumigation and ventilation process the area should be cordoned off from pedestrians and traffic for the entire process including the ventilation period. Fumigation warning signs should also be placed on the container and around the area so that warning visibility is clear. These signs can be removed again when the process is completed.

Stack fumigations can also be done in the same manner using 180micron gas tight plastic sheeting and ensuring good air circulation by using one or more fans on low rotation which helps to move the gas around the stack for the minimum period of 24 hours for almost all borers (96 grams per cubic meter for a period of 48 hours in the case of *Lyctus brunneus*).

It is best to adjust the Methyl Bromide usage a bit when the weather temperatures vary as penetration is better in the following cases:

10.0 – 15.9 degrees Celsius – 64g per cubic meter.
16.0 – 20.9 degrees Celsius – 56g per cubic meter.
21 degrees Celsius – 48g per cubic meter.

Remember items where the wood is 6mm thick or less, pressed wood of any kind (chipped board or super wood and the like) do not need to be fumigated.

Remember too when fumigated items are sent out of the country the customs officials on the arrivals side will require a certificate of fumigation to accompany the documents package so that said items can be cleared. This should be provided on a company letterhead to the client, and a copy kept in the client's records at your offices for later reference if required.

So for your fumigation requirements it is always best to use a company registered for fumigations which is also a SAPCA member. As always remember to wear the correct protective equipment.

Happy fumigating everyone.

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P.S. Some license has been taken with the term "borer" as it is a commonly used terminology.

We are of course referring to all Wood Destroying Organisms. ☺

