

SENDING SAFE AID WITHOUT HARMFUL PESTS AND DISEASES

FACTSHEET
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For agencies and development partners sending new and used building materials

Please help us to safeguard our vulnerable environment and communities by ensuring that any humanitarian aid that is sent does not inadvertently introduce harmful pests and diseases

Why is this important to us?

The movement of humanitarian aid is a known pathway for the introduction of harmful pests and diseases. Unless appropriate and timely risk management is applied, these new pests and diseases may become established and continue to cause long-term damage to our economy, environment and communities long after we have recovered from the emergency situation.

The introduction of new pests and diseases can affect the quality and yield of agricultural produce which can jeopardise food security. Pest introductions can also damage the sanitary and phytosanitary status of a country, making it more difficult to trade with other countries and build back the economy.

During crisis situations, we are temporarily constrained in our ability to implement our normal phytosanitary activities on donated goods at the border. This is because our treatment and processing infrastructure may be damaged or inaccessible; water, electricity and other services may be cut and staff may be unable to travel to work or may be diverted to emergency tasks. Additionally, other government agencies and officials frequently require the immediate release of goods to people in need without going through our normal process.

To ensure that our staff can focus effort on other priority activities such as food and shelter distribution, please help us by taking steps to mitigate the pest risk of donated goods **prior to export**. For building materials this may include cleaning, treatment and pre-clearance ahead of shipment.

Pest risk considerations associated with building materials

Not all types of building material pose the same pest and disease risk. As a general rule:

- New building materials pose a lower pest risk than used building materials (which are more likely to be contaminated with soil and plant material from the field).
- Concrete, plaster, cement, and other fully processed articles (e.g., structural steel, metal joists, ceramic tiles and pavers etc.) pose lower pest risk than sawn wood and earth-based materials.
- Treated wood and treated earth-based materials pose a lower pest risk than untreated materials.
- The risk of contamination of materials increases during storage or transport especially in artificially lit areas, vegetated areas or locations where the materials make direct contact with the soil.

Pest insects such as borers can easily hide and reproduce in untreated wooden materials and can emerge and spread once in the new country.

Sand, gravel and earth can host a wide range of pests and diseases such as fungi, bacteria and nematodes that are damaging to plant health.



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Grain support beetle infesting untreated wood (Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org).



Inspecting timber dunnage for pests and diseases (C. Dale).

What can you do to help us?

Before sending any aid, please work with your department of agriculture or relevant quarantine authority to ensure that:

- The goods are permitted into the country receiving aid.
- All import requirements of the receiving country are met.
- Required treatments are applied before export.
- The appropriate documentation and clearances are sent with the aid shipment.

The above processes are performed by your department of agriculture or relevant quarantine authority as part of normal trade/export practices, please contact them if you have any queries on what to do.

To help us by mitigating the pest risk prior to export we suggest that:

- If a treatment to reduce the pest risk is required, then building materials can be treated with ionising radiation, fumigation (including methyl bromide or ethylene oxide fumigations), heat treatment or cold storage.
- Wood packaging materials (dunnage, crating, packing blocks, drums, cases, load boards, pallet collars, skids or pallets etc.) securing building materials or prefabricated buildings, should be [ISPM 15](#) compliant and the mark clearly visible on the wood surface.
- Articles made from wood that is less than 6mm thick and manufactured building material made of wholly processed wood material including plywood, chipboard, oriented strand board, particleboard, masonite, medium and high-density fibreboard and press board are considered lower risk.
- Due to the lower associated pest risk, where possible, please consider sending manufactured or highly processed and treated building materials rather than unprocessed or untreated materials.
- Agencies and development partners should reconsider donating any raw and untreated wood, sand, gravel or any building material likely to contain soil or raw plant material e.g. straw.

- Building materials which have been stored in open areas lit at night, and in the proximity of vegetation, should be inspected, and if necessary, cleaned, disinfested and pre-cleared before sending to destination countries.

Prior to shipment it is best to store building materials away from heavily vegetated areas, on surfaces that contact with soil/grass, or areas that are artificially lit at night. This reduces the risk of pest contamination. If seasonal pest outbreaks (e.g. brown marmorated stinkbug) are a normal occurrence in your county, or if the above conditions can't be met, consider using special protection e.g. wrapping/covering to reduce the risk of pest contamination.

Please consider sending lower risk items where possible and re-consider sending any high risk items such as:

- Sand, gravel, air-dried mud bricks or material containing or made of soil or earth or plant material that has not been treated.
- Wood or timber pieces with bark attached should not be sent.
- Untreated wood or plant products e.g. untreated wood for roofing, thatch roofing materials such as straw, dried reed grasses, dried banana or palm leaves.

If packaging or packing is used, it should be new, clean and free of pests and other contaminants.

Any freight containers that are used for storage or transport should also be cleaned and pest free (see [IPPC best practice guide on measures to minimise pest contamination](#) for more information)¹.

¹ International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) recommendation on the safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/89786/>.

COMPLIANCE WITH ISPM 15: A REQUIREMENT FOR WOOD PALLETS AND PACKAGING

Please check that all wooden packaging materials such as pallets and crates display the ISPM 15 mark above to demonstrate they are compliant with international standards.

