Wood Packaging Material (WPM) requirements from 1 January 2021

Currently, all wood packaging material (WPM) moving between the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU), including Switzerland and Liechtenstein, can move freely without checks and controls. At the end of the Transition Period, this will change.

From 1 January 2021 all WPM moving between GB and the EU must meet ISPM15 international standards by undergoing heat treatment and marking. All WPM may be subject to official checks either upon or after entry to the EU or GB. This requirement is already in place for WPM moving between the Rest of World (RoW), i.e. non-EU countries, and the EU, and UK.

Checks on WPM will be carried out in GB on a risk-targeted basis. The plant health risk from WPM imported from the EU is not expected to change from 1 January 2021.

WPM from 1 January 2021 Q&A

What products does WPM refer to?

Wood packaging material (WPM) includes:

- Pallets
- Boxes
- Crates
- Cable drums
- Dunnage

What is ISPM 15?

International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures 15 (ISPM 15) sets out measures required to reduce the risk of the introduction and spread of pests associated with wood packaging material (WPM). For GB, this requires all WPM (bar exceptions) entering and leaving GB to be treated and marked.

Are there any exemptions?

Whilst there can be exceptions to the exempted products listed below, depending on the country of origin and the type of wood used in the product manufacture, the following articles are generally regarded as being of sufficiently low risk to be exempt from ISPM 15 requirements –

- wood packaging material made entirely from thin wood (6 mm or less in thickness)

- wood packaging made wholly of processed wood material, such as plywood, particle board,

oriented strand board or veneer that has been created using glue, heat or pressure, or a combination

thereof

- barrels for wine and spirit that have been heated during manufacture

- gift boxes for wine, cigars and other commodities made from wood that has been processed and/or

manufactured in a way that renders it free of pests

- sawdust, wood shavings and wood wool

- wood components permanently attached to freight vehicles and containers.

How do I ensure my WPM is compliant?

Contact your supplier or [TIMCON](#) if you need more advice about the steps you can take to prepare for the end of the Transition Period.

What happens if my WPM is not compliant?

There will be no change to the way that we treat WPM checks after the end of the Transition Period. WPM that is low risk in phytosanitary terms won't be systematically checked for compliance and checks on higher risk WPM (including that from high-risk origins) will be checked at a level commensurate with the risk is poses. Where non-complaint WPM is identified, it is removed from use and destroyed in a way that eliminates any phytosanitary risk. Plant health inspectors serve statutory plant health notices on those responsible for the non-compliant WPM and these notices will specify the remedial action.

Failure to comply with a statutory notice is an offence punishable by civil and/or criminal sanctions as detailed [here](#).

Does WPM moving between GB and the EU need to be ISPM 15 compliant?

From 1 January 2021 regulated WPM moving between GB and the EU must meet international standards (ISPM 15) by undergoing heat treatment and marking.

Does WPM moving from Northern Ireland (NI) to GB need to be to be ISPM 15 compliant?

As committed to in the [New Decade, New Approach](#) deal to restore the Northern Ireland Executive, the UK Government will guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses (including businesses headquartered in Great Britain with operations in Northern Ireland) to the rest of the UK internal market from 1 January 2021, ensuring that trade from Northern Ireland to Great Britain continues for those businesses as it does now.

Therefore, as now, wood packaging material (including wooden pallets) moved from NI to GB by NI businesses will **not** need to comply with international standards (ISPM 15).

Does WPM moving from GB to NI need to be ISPM 15 compliant?

As set out in the Command Paper on [The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol](#), and proposed by the UK Government last October, there will be new sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. These requirements will uphold the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit.

At the end of the transition period, wood packaging material, including pallets and crates, moving from GB to NI will need to be treated and appropriately marked in compliance with international standards ISPM 15.

Does WPM moving from ROI to NI need to be ISPM 15 complaint?

Building on the existing practice established to maintain the Single Epidemiological Unit on the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland will align with EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules. Therefore, as now, wood packaging material (including wooden pallets) moved from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland will not need to comply with international standards (ISPM 15).

Do wooden manufactured products, such as staircases, entering GB from EU need to be treated for insects as part of the ISPM 15 requirements?

Manufactured/processed items, such wooden staircases, are not wood packaging material and they are not on the regulated plants and plant products list and therefore would not require a phytosanitary certificate or pre-notification, or to be ISPM 15 compliant.

Does wood packaging material in the form of stickers and spacers and dunnage used to transport consignments of sawn timber need to be ISPM15 compliant?

Where wooden stickers, spacers and dunnage is used to transport consignments of regulated sawn timber and they are of the same type and quality as the timber commodity being shipped, then they do not need to be compliant with ISPM15.

Will there be new checks on WPM moving into the UK?

As there will be no immediate change to the WPM biosecurity threat as a result of the end of the Transition Period, GB will continue to take a risk-based approach to checks on WPM as we do now and will not systematically conduct checks at the border on EU WPM.

Will there be new checks on WPM moving from GB to the EU?

After the end of the Transition Period, all wood packaging material (WPM) moving between GB and the EU must be treated and appropriately marked in compliance with international standards (ISPM 15). This is in line with international requirements for trade and is in place to protect both the EU and GB from harmful plant pests and diseases.

Is industry set up to carry out ISPM 15 treatment and marking on all wood packaging material?

Defra has established a strong relationship with the wood packaging material industry. We have worked closely to develop policies which will ensure our biosecurity is maintained and trade continues to flow with as little disruption as possible. The wood packaging material (WPM) industry have been working tirelessly with government to implement an exemption from retreatment and remarking requirements for repair operations within the major GB pallet pool sectors, enabling them to increase the number of ISPM 15 compliant pallets. The UK Timber Pallet and Packaging Confederation (TIMCON) report that WPM treatment capacity has increased, with a greater number of heat treatment facilities (kilns), operating over longer hours.

In the event there is a Deal Scenario between the UK and the EU, will goods traveling into the UK from the EU continue to be ISPM 15 complaint?

The UK is leaving the EU's customs union and single market. That means businesses will have to prepare for life outside of these, which will inevitably mean extra processes required on UK-EU trade. As such, after the end of the Transition Period, all wood packaging material (WPM), including wooden pallets, moving between GB and the EU must be treated and appropriately marked in compliance with international

standards (ISPM 15). This is in line with international requirements for trade and is in place to protect both the EU and GB from harmful plant pests and diseases.

Where can I find more information?

More information and advice on importing and exporting wood packaging material can be found at gov.uk and TIMCON.

Further guidance on importing and exporting plants and plant products after the end of the transition period can be found at gov.uk.