

TECHNICAL NOTE NUMBER A-1

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY - U. S. FOREST SERVICE - MADISON, WISCONSIN.

HINTS ON STORING TIMBER TO PREVENT DECAY

Many serious losses from decay in wooden structures are due to the fact that the timbers used were infected with wood-destroying fungi while in storage. These losses can be greatly reduced by keeping lumber storage yards in a sanitary condition. Some hints as to how to do this are given below:

STORE ON WELL-DRAINED GROUND. Efforts should be made to store the product on well-drained ground, removed from the possible dangers of floods, high tides, and standing water.

REMOVE DEBRIS AND KEEP DOWN WEEDS. All rotting debris scattered about yards should be collected and burned, no matter whether it be decayed foundation and tramway timbers or stored lumber which has become infected. In the case of yards already filled in to considerable depths with sawdust and other woody debris the situation can be improved by a heavy surfacing with soil, slag, or similar material. Weeds should be cut away from the piles to allow good ventilation.

USE PROPER FOUNDATIONS. More attention should be given to the foundation of lumber piles in order to insure freedom from decay and better ventilation beneath the stacks. Solid foundations should never be used. In humid regions the stock should not be piled less than 18 to 24 inches from the ground. Wood blocking used in direct contact with wet ground should be protected by the application of creosote or other anti-septic oils or else replaced by concrete, brick, or other durable materials. Treated skid timbers would also be highly advantageous.

SLOPE LUMBER PILES. Foundations should be built so that the piles will slope approximately 1 inch to every foot of length.

ASSIST VENTILATION BY AVOIDING CLOSE PILING IN THE OPEN. In most regions lumber should not be close piled in the open, but should be "stuck" with crossers at least 1 inch thick. Lateral spacing is also very desirable. Roofing or cover boards on the piles should not be neglected, and should extend over for several inches in front and back.

TAKE CARE OF "STICKERS." Instead of throwing the "stickers" about on the ground to become infected with decay, they should be handled carefully and when not in use piled on sound foundations and kept as dry as possible. If pine saturated with resin, or the heartwood of such durable species as white oak or red gum is employed, the danger of infection will be greatly decreased.

KEEP SHEDS DRY AND WELL AIRED. In storage sheds the necessity for piling higher from the ground is very apparent in many cases. The same remedies apply here as for pile foundations in the open. The sheds should be tightly roofed and the siding should not be run down below the bottom of the foundation sills. Free air circulation should be allowed from all sides beneath the enclosure. Only thoroughly dry stock should be stored in close piles under cover.

CHECK FUNGUS OUTBREAKS. Should fungous outbreaks occur in storage sheds not constructed to meet sanitary needs the infected foundation timbers should all be torn out and replaced with wood soaked in an antiseptic solution or by concrete or brick. In all cases the new foundations should be so constructed as to keep the lumber well off the ground, and the soil and timber adjacent to the infected area should be sprayed or painted with an antiseptic solution of a water-soluble salt, such as sodium fluoride, mercuric chloride, zinc chloride, or copper sulphate.