



TIMBER & HARDWARE

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CCA – The Facts

So how much arsenic is around?

In detailed work performed in the USA on behalf of the EPA (their regulatory body) it was shown that the amount of arsenic in a leached solution from treated timber was in the region of 0.001 parts per million or less. Compare this with the natural arsenic content of foods such as:

- Rice 0.40 ppm
- Potatoes 0.63 ppm
- Mushrooms 0.66 ppm
- Tomatoes 1.49 ppm
- Shrimps 19.90 ppm

Source: Contact - the TPAA Newsletter, 2nd August Issue 2003

1490 times more arsenic in a tomato? That'll be the last toasted sandwich you eat.

What is Arsenic?

Arsenic occurs naturally in sedimentary and hard rock aquifers, which are in many developing countries used as source of drinking water. Additionally natural arsenic is often found in thermal and mineral waters, which reach the Earth's surface either by natural discharge in springs or by geothermal exploitation.

Symbol: As

Atomic number: 33

Atomic weight: 74.922

Metalloid element of group 15. There are three allotropes, yellow, black, and grey. Reacts with halogens, concentrated oxidizing acids and hot alkalis. Albertus Magnus is believed to have been the first to isolate the element in 1250.

What is chromated copper arsenate?

Chromated copper arsenate or CCA, is a chemical preservative that is used to protect wood from being destroyed by microbes, termites, or other wood-boring insects. CCA contains forms of the chemicals chromium, copper, and arsenic. CCA is largely used to pressure treat lumber intended for outdoor uses such as home, school, and community playgrounds; decks; and landscape timbers. CCA-treated lumber is also used in building structures.

The treatment process of pine involves placing the timber inside a pressurised tank. The CCA solution is then forced directly into the cell structure of the timber. The solution is made up of approximately 90% water. Arsenic only makes up about 3.3%