

# Northamptonshire Wood Recycling

Doing something good with wood

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#)

## What do the markings on pallets mean?

Pallets are a great source of cheap timber for all sorts of projects. You only have to do a quick search on web sites such as Pinterest to find amazing ideas from simple tables to houses. But before you run for the workshop with hammer in hand may need to consider if the pallets you have found in that skip down the road is safe for your project.

Before you even pick up that perfect pallet, you may just want to check it over. Here are a few pointers to take a look at first.

### **Has it had something spilled on it?**

*Visually inspect the pallet before you even think of picking it up!!!!*

If there are signs of any sort of spillage leave it well alone. You can never be really sure what the substance is. That spill may be toxic and there's always another pallet around the corner.

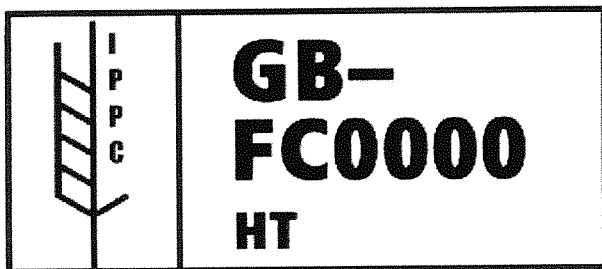
### **Markings**

Whether you are about to start a project using pallets or are just using it for firewood, there's a few important pointers you need to be aware of. Some pallets carry symbols and codes which follow the ISPM15 Packaging Marking System, although not all do.

## What if there's no markings?

If there is no stamp it's a "national pallet" and has not been treated. As long as nothing has been spilled on it and you can be sure of the source it should be safe to use.

## International Pallets



[https://northantswoodrecycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/pallet\\_markings1.jpg](https://northantswoodrecycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/pallet_markings1.jpg)

The stamp will include the IPPC symbol. Typically the code will include the manufacturer's 2 digit country code such as GB followed by a company Registration Code. A 2 digit treatment code should also be included such as HT, KD, DB or MB.

**HT (Heat Treated)** – Heated to remove parasites and are not harmful

**MB (Methyl Bromide)** – Treated with toxic Methyl Bromide. DON'T USE

**DB (Debarked)** – The tree's bark has been removed and are not harmful

**KD (Kiln Dried)** – Heat Treatment designed to reduce moisture and are not harmful

Pallets with EPAL or EURO are un-treated and are safe to use

## **Why are pallets treated?**

Treatment is designed to reduce the spread of pests within the wood and to reduce the growth of fungi and other organic matter which may be harmful. It is also designed to prolong the life of the pallet.

## **What is Heat Treatment?**

This is currently, the only UK approved treatment for wood. The wood is heated to 56 degrees C for 30 minutes. No chemicals are used in the process which means that the wood is safe to use as firewood or for diy projects.

## **What is Methyl Bromide (MB)?**

Used to control insects, weeds and pathogens Methyl Bromide or MB has been used to treat pallets. Although no longer used in the UK or EU it is still used in other country's and older pallets treated in this way will still be in circulation. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) it has been linked to Ozone depletion and is toxic. If you do come across pallets treated in this way you should avoid where possible and definitely not use as firewood or on any projects indoors.

## **What about coloured pallets?**

**Blue** pallets with the word CHEP are the property of this company

**Red** pallets are from LPR

**Brown** are from IPP

These are usually rented and legally still belong to the company. We recommend you leave these alone especially if you consider that the paint is classed as treated by waste management companies.

## **Final Word**

The best advice is that if you are unsure of it's source or don't know what has been spilled on it, don't use it. There's plenty more out there and it's not worth risking your health. Legislation is always changing so if you see something here that's now different please post a reply.

## **Useful Links**

UK Government website- <https://www.gov.uk/requirements-for-wood-packaging-used-for-imports-and-exports> (<https://www.gov.uk/requirements-for-wood-packaging-used-for-imports-and-exports>)

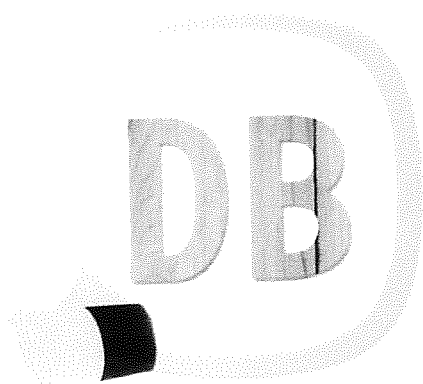
US EPA – <http://www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/qa.html> (<http://www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/qa.html>)

Timcon – <https://www.timcon.org/ISPM15/Information/Information.asp> (<https://www.timcon.org/ISPM15/Information/Information.asp>)

[Northamptonshire Wood Recycling](http://www.northantswoodrecycling.org.uk)(<http://www.northantswoodrecycling.org.uk>)

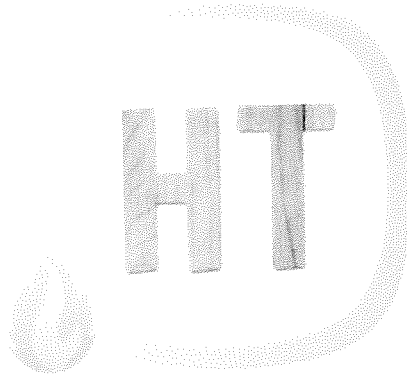
ISPM15 – [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISPM\\_15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISPM_15) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISPM\\_15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISPM_15))

# PALLET TREATMENT CODES



**DEBARKED**

untreated and should be safe to use



**HEAT TREATED**

untreated and should be safe to use



**KILN-DRIED**

untreated and should be safe to use



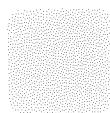
**EUROPEAN PALLET ASSOCIATION LOGO**

debarked and heat treated should be safe to use



**OLD EUROPEAN PALLET ASSOCIATION LOGO**

avoid use unless EPAL approved



SAFE TO USE



AVOID USE

Even for the safe-to-use codes, verify the origin of your pallets or try to have a traceability. This infographic is for info incorrect use of the present document.

MB=Chemical you don't want to handle  
Don't touch/use pallets with stains