

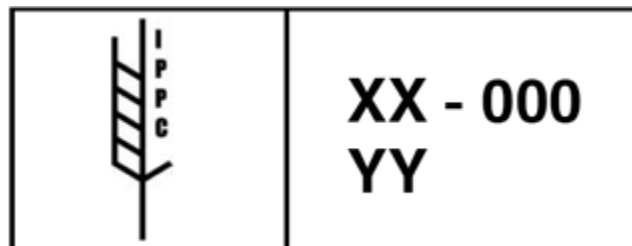


Division of Paleontology Use of Solid Wood Packing Materials (SWPM)

A particular issue affecting the transport of paleontological specimens into the Museum is the use of solid wood packing materials. SWPM refers to primary wood packing materials other than loose wood packing materials used for, or for use, with cargo to prevent damage including, but not limited to, dunnage, crating, pallets, packing blocks, drums, cases and skids. Plywood, together with other synthetic or highly processed wood materials, are **not** subject to the requirements of SWPM control. SWPM are often used in the construction of crates used to transport specimens from the field.

SWPM is vulnerable to attack by wood boring insects; crates and pallets made from untreated wood are thought to have been the source of the 1996 outbreak of Asiatic long-horned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) in New York and New Jersey. Such invasive species represent a significant threat to US forestry and agriculture. In the museum environment they may cause serious damage to untreated wood artifacts, furniture, and structural timbers.

Because of the threat represented by wood-boring beetles, in September 2005 the US implemented a law stating that all SWPM entering the country must have been either heat-treated or Methyl Bromide fumigated. Wood that has been treated in this way receives a stamp, an example of which is shown below:



Where 'XX' is a two letter country code, followed by a three digit number identifying the company that produced the packing material.

Any members of the Division undertaking fieldwork overseas should be aware that timber purchased overseas for the purpose of constructing crates must have undergone heat treatment or fumigation and must have been stamped to prove this prior to importation to the US.

Given that obtaining treated timber may be difficult or impossible in many areas where fieldwork is conducted, serious consideration should be given to using shipping containers made from other materials, such as plastic or metal.

In the event that wood has to be used, a treated timber supplier in the country in question should be identified in advance; SWPM can then be purchased and transported into the field at the start of the field season.

Failure to use appropriately treated SWPM, and to provide evidence of such when shipping specimens into the country, may be grounds for **denial of entry, destruction of the shipment, and legal sanctions including fines.**