how you can help the watershed...

# decks & lumber

Pressure-treated lumber is popular for good reason. It resists rot and insect damage. For many homeowners, treated lumber is the choice for decks, play equipment, docks, porches, fencing and a variety of other outdoor applications.

What is **pressure-treated lumber?** Simply put, it is wood that has been injected with a solution that includes copper, chromium and arsenic (CCA) under high pressure. Copper is toxic to fungi that cause rot, and arsenic is an effective pesticide. Concerns have been raised over the possibility that these chemicals may leach out of the treated lumber, contaminating soils and waterways. Copper is harmful to plants and marine life. Arsenic is hazardous to humans and other animals.

Although treated lumber is a common building material, few people know how to handle and maintain it properly. Whether you already have treated lumber in your yard or are considering it for future projects, be sure to follow the important safety tips on the back of this card.

Improve water quality right now. Use and maintain treated lumber properly.

Developed in partnership with the City of Ann Arbor, the Village of Milford, MDEQ and USEPA.
For more information, call the Huron River Watershed Council at **734-769-5123** or find us on the web at **www.hrwc.org**.

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A. There is no need to replace **existing structures** made of CCA treated lumber. (The exception is if treated lumber was used for vegetable gardens or composters. These should be removed.) Instead, paint or reseal structures every 2 – 3 years to reduce leaching. Avoid sanding if possible (see "new construction" below).

B. **New construction:** Wear a mask and gloves when working with treated lumber. Collect sawdust from cutting or sanding on a tarp. When done, carefully fold the sawdust into the tarp and dispose of it in the trash. Do not eat, drink or smoke when working with treated lumber. Wash hands and face carefully when done. Launder clothes separately.

C. CCA is being phased out of production. Ask for arsenic-free **alternatives. Even better:** composite decking is an increasingly popular alternative. Made of 100% recycled plastic and wood fiber, it requires no sanding or sealants, and does not crack or splinter. Composite decking presents a great option for decks, docks, boardwalks and other structures near waterways. (Brand name: Trex, 800-295-6107, or on the web at www.trex.com)

D. Proper **disposal**: Treated lumber cannot be incinerated or recycled. It must be placed in land fills. Before you dispose of a structure, consider if it can be resealed instead. Never burn treated lumber! Toxic compounds are released into the air when treated lumber is burned. The resulting ash contains highly toxic concentrations of arsenic—just one tablespoon contains enough arsenic to kill an adult human.

**Proper deck care protects you and the environment.**