



Frequently Asked Questions about AUSTRALIAN WOOD PACKAGING CERTIFICATION SCHEME

1. What is the AWP Certification Scheme (AWPCS)?

The AWPCS is a certification scheme developed by AQIS to ensure that Australian treatment providers and wood packaging manufacturers produce wood packaging material that meets the requirements of ISPM 15. Under this scheme wood packaging manufacturers and treatment providers who meet the requirements of ISPM 15 will, after successful audit by NCS International, be authorised by AQIS to apply an internationally recognised mark to wood packaging material.

'ISPM 15' is the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures Publication No. 15: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade. ISPM 15 was developed to address the global spread of timber pests by regulating the movement of timber packing and dunnage in international trade. ISPM 15 describes phytosanitary measures to reduce the risk of introduction and/or spread of quarantine pests associated with solid timber packing material. (More detailed information on the ICPM, the IPPC (including its relationship to international trade), and other international agreements is provided on the International Phytosanitary Portal, the official website for the www.ippc.int)

The certification scheme applies to organisations that export products or packaging containing coniferous (softwood) and non-coniferous (hardwood) raw wood packaging material. The standard does not apply to wood packaging made wholly of wood-based products such as plywood, particle board, oriented strand board, medium density fibre board or products created using glue, heat and pressure or a combination of these.

All companies certified under the AWPCS will be listed on the AWPCS Register which will be accessible on the AQIS website at www.aqis.com.au as soon as companies start becoming certified.

2. Who is certified to this standard?

If you are involved in the export of commodities of any kind into countries that have implemented ISPM 15, and use wooden packaging material in the transportation of these commodities, then you will have to comply with the standard.

Many member countries of the ICPM including Australia have implemented systems to accept ISPM 15 compliant imports. A list of country implementation dates is provided on the AQIS website. Click on the link below to be directed to this information

[Country implementation dates for International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 15: Guidelines for regulating wood packaging material in international trade \(ISPM 15\)](#)

Please note the list of country implementation dates is provided in good faith as a guide only. Exporters are encouraged to confirm the importing country's requirements for wood packaging prior to export.

3. Why are they certified to this standard?

Organisations seek certification for many different reasons:

- Contracts which the organisation is pursuing may require certification to a particular Standard as a tender condition.
- Certification can provide customers confidence in the services provided by the certified organisation and can therefore be used as a marketing tool.
- Certification provides a verified demonstrated commitment by the organisation to continual improvement and effective customer focus.
- Certified Management Systems have been demonstrated to improve business outcomes and to assist in managing risks within the organisation.
- Certified Management Systems can increase the efficiency of business processes, and thereby reduce waste and rework.
- Sometimes, certification to a particular standard is a requirement for international trade.
- Many organisations believe that certification of their management system can help to increase sales, reduce staff turnover, improve morale and improve profitability.

4. What are the steps to certification?

While there are some variations in the process depending on the particular requirements of the standard to which the organisation is seeking certification, the following is a general guide.

- The organisation must apply to NCSI, to become a client.
- NCSI will appoint a Client Manager, usually an auditor with skills and experience in the relevant industry to assist the organisation on its journey to certification.
- A documentation review is conducted of the organisation's AWPCS documentation against the requirements of the nominated Standard and a detailed report on the level of compliance to the standard is prepared.
- A certification audit is conducted after the documentation review to allow the organisation to address any issues identified as likely barriers to certification. The length of time spent on the audit depends on a number of factors, including the size of the organisation and the level of risk identified for the organisation.
- The auditor makes a recommendation to AQIS regarding certification which is reviewed by an independent member of the NCSI technical staff. If the recommendation is accepted, the organisation is then certified.

- The length of time from application to certification varies but often organisations take less than 3 months to achieve certification.

5. How much does certification cost?

The cost of obtaining certification varies, depending on the size and complexity of the organisation, its geographical location, and the number of standards to which the organisation wishes to be certified. To obtain a detailed quotation, please go to NCSI's home page and click on "free quote".

6. Where can I find out more?

You can:

- Request more information through the website at www.ncsi.com.au
- Call 1800 652 345
- Contact an NCSI staff member at the office in your state, listed on the NCSI Home Page under "NCSI Offices".
- Download the AWPCS from the AQIS web site at www.aqis.gov.au. Alternatively if you experience any difficulties downloading this material or require additional information contact Leanne Payne on 02 6272 5037 or by e-mail at leanne.payne@aqis.gov.au.

About NCS International

NCS International Pty Ltd (NCSI) assesses how well an organisation goes about its business, and whether its operations meet accepted International and National Standards.

Operating across a wide range of industries and government sectors, NCSI provides diligent and practical audits that cover an enterprise's systems and processes.

NCSI awards its **WorldStar** mark to organisations which meet the relevant standard to which they aim to be certified (see below). The **WorldStar** mark is the public proclamation that an organisation is certified and indicates its commitment to sound management systems and effective customer service.

Customers of organisations that display NCSI's **WorldStar** mark can be confident they're dealing with people committed to excellence and continual improvement in meeting their customer's requirements.

NCSI's certification programs offer audit and certification to Standards for Quality Assurance, Environment, OH&S, Food Safety (HACCP), and Disability Employment Services, amongst many other programs.

NCSI was established in its own right in 1997. It is a subsidiary of the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), which is Australia's national provider of laboratory accreditation and the world's first and largest association of accredited laboratories. NCSI is JAS-ANZ accredited, and is entitled to use the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accreditation symbol on its certification.