

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** December 30,2019

**Report Number:** JA2019-0214

## **Report Name:** Import Regulations and Standards for Wood Products

**Country:** Japan

**Post:** Tokyo

**Report Category:** Wood Products, FAIRS Export Certificate Report, FAIRS Annual Country Report, FAIRS Subject Report

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### **Report Highlights:**

This report provides an overview of Japan’s general legal, technical and certification requirements for imported forest products, such as wood and bioenergy products.

For more information on Japan’s import requirements on food and agricultural products, see FAS/Japan’s [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Annual Country Report](#).

**Note: This report was prepared by USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Tokyo, Japan for U.S. exporters of wood and bioenergy products. While every possible care has been taken in preparation of this report, information provided may no longer be complete or precise as some import requirements are subject to frequent changes. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters ensure that all necessary custom clearance requirements have been verified with local authorities through your foreign importer before the sales conditions are finalized. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

## Section I. General Wood Products Laws

There are five major laws in Japan governing the use of wood products, including imports:

1. [The Plant Protection Act](#) aims to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and diseases in Japan. It is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) as Japan's national plant protection authority. This law requires phytosanitary inspections of domestic and imported plants, and established import control policies on logs and untreated lumber with bark.
2. [The Japanese Agricultural Standards \(JAS\) Act](#) established a voluntary quality assurance system for 11 wood product types (more details on [JA2019-0195](#)). MAFF administers the JAS Act, last amended in 2017.
3. [The Building Standards Law \(BSL\)](#) defines the building codes for structural safety, fire safety, and indoor air quality of building structures. BSL and related building codes frequently specify wood building materials permitted for use in construction projects in Japan. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) administers the BSL.
4. [The Act on the Promotion of Use and Distribution of Legally-Harvested Wood and Wood Products](#) (also known as the Clean Wood Act) established voluntary normative wood sourcing guidelines. The Clean Wood Act provides a voluntary registration system, where registered companies commit to verifying the sourcing of their wood products inventory. The enforcement of the Act falls to the Forestry Agency, METI or MLIT, based on the wood product in question.
5. [The Act on Promotion of Procurement of Eco-Friendly Goods and Services by the State and Other Entities](#) (also known as the Green Purchasing Act) aims to promote the use of sustainable materials by various state entities. The Ministry of the Environment administers the Green Purchasing Act. Under the Green Purchasing Act, MAFF's Forestry Agency monitors compliance for wood products broadly, while the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) oversees paper products and wooden furniture, and MLIT monitors certain building materials.

## Section II. Certification and Other Accreditation

#	Product(s)	Title of Certificate/ Accreditation	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
1	Logs and green lumber with bark	<a href="#">Phytosanitary Certificate</a> (issued by USDA Animal Health and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS))	Attestation to the absence of quarantine pests (injurious plants and animals)	Plant health	MAFF
2	Wood Packaging (pallets, crates, dunnage)	The International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) 15 compliant stamp	Attestation to treatment to prevent transport and spread of pests and disease	Plant health	MAFF
3	Wood products	No specific name (e.g., non-governmental certificate issued by an internationally recognized authority)	Attestation of legal sourcing	Compliance with Japan's legal harvest guidelines for wood products	Forestry Agency, MLIT and METI
4	Wood products for government procurement	No specific name (e.g., non-governmental certificate issued by an internationally recognized authority)	Attestation of legal and sustainable sourcing	Compliance with Japan's legal harvest guidelines for wood products	Ministry of Environment, Forestry Agency, MLIT, and METI
5	Woody biomass for power facilities under the Feed-in Tariff (FIT)	No specific name (e.g., third party chain-of-custody forest certification)	Attestation of legal sourcing and sustainable forest management practices	Compliance with Japan's sourcing requirements in the Feed-in Tariff program	Forestry Agency and METI
6	Wood Products for construction	Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS)	Attestation of the quality of products	Compliance with the Building Standards Law of Japan (BSL)	MLIT and MAFF
7	Engineered	F☆☆☆☆	Attestation of the	Compliance	MLIT

wood products for construction		low emission levels for formaldehyde	with indoor quality of BSL	
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### Section III. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate

#### #1 – Absence of Quarantine Pests in Logs

Importers of logs and untreated lumber with bark must submit a Plant Quarantine Inspection Certificate issued by APHIS to the plant protection station at the designated port of entry. Japanese ports equipped with plant quarantine facilities and equipment are designated as ports of entry for imported plant products. Designated ports and airports are listed in [Article 6 of the Plant Protection Law Enforcement Regulation](#) (in Japanese only). As of 2019, MAFF enforces the phytosanitary certificate requirement on imports of certain tree species (e.g., American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*)). MAFF maintains a [database](#) (in Japanese only) of detailed requirements and information for each plant species.

Processed wood products (e.g., kiln-dried lumber, engineered wood, and others) are not subject to the plant quarantine inspection.

#### #2 – Compliance with ISPM 15 on Wood Packaging Materials

As a signatory to the International Plant Protection Convention, Japan adopted the [ISPM 15](#) titled “Regulation of Wood Packaging Material in International Trade.” Imported wood packing materials, such pallets, crates and dunnages, require an ISPM treatment certification stamp to indicate that the packing materials are free from pests. Wood packaging materials without the ISPM 15 compliant stamp is subject to a quarantine inspection. Wood packaging made from processed wood materials, such as oriented strand board (OSB), hardboard, plywood, or paper are exempted from ISPM 15 requirement.

#### #3 – Voluntary Verification of Legal Sourcing of Wood Products

The Clean Wood Act provides for a voluntary registration system, where registered companies commit to verifying the sourcing of their wood products inventory (see [JA8002](#)). Thus, Japanese importers and buyers registered in the system may request exporters to provide supporting documentation. To comply with the verification requirement, importers may (i) rely on a third-party forest certification system or chain-of-custody (CoC) forest certification system, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), and American Tree Farm System (ATFS); or (ii) utilize an industry certification scheme run by forestry and forest products associations (e.g., American Hardwood Environmental Profile (AHEP)). Alternatively, an importer can establish an internal traceability system to monitor, record, report and manage the legality of forest products along the supply chain. Further information is available from the [Forestry Agency](#).

#### #4—Mandatory Verification of Legal Sourcing of Wood Products for Government Procurement

To target Government of Japan procurements, importers must verify legal sourcing of imported wood products and paper products. Forestry Agency’s [guidelines for verification on legality and sustainability of wood and wood products](#) have be followed. As with the Clean Wood Act, importers can comply with the Green Purchasing Act by providing sourcing verification documents from (i) third-party forest and CoC certifiers, or (ii) forest products associations (e.g., AHEP). Alternatively, importers can establish and maintain own traceability system for the supply chain. Sourcing verification documents from the Clean Wood registration system participants are acceptable to meet the Green Purchasing Act requirements. Additional information about Japan’s Green Purchasing Act can be found on the [Japanese Council for Tackling Illegal Logging and Promotion of Goho-wood](#) website.

#### #5 – Sourcing and Sustainability of Woody Biomass and Agricultural Residues for Power Facilities under the FIT System

Under Japan’s FIT system, power plants that use sustainable energy sources, such as woody biomass, benefit from feed-in tariffs ([Japan 2019 Biofuels Annual](#)). Woody biomass is subdivided into (i) “unutilized wood (i.e. domestic material from forest thinning and forest residues)”, and (ii) “general wood and agricultural residues,” including imported wood pellets. While sustainability certification requirements are not explicitly set in the FIT program, third-party CoC forest and biomass certification should provide sufficient verification. If third-party forest certification is not feasible, the Forestry Agency publishes [guidelines](#) (in Japanese only) for alternative ways to verify sustainability/legality of forestry products.

#### #6—JAS and Equivalent Grading on Construction Material

JAS is a voluntary but widely used product standard system administered by MAFF. Japan’s BSL requires JAS certification of certain forest products utilized in construction. Alternatively, products that are not JAS certified must obtain approval from the MLIT Minister through a costly and complicated process. Consequently, virtually all engineered wood products, such as glulam, laminated veneer lumber (LVL), cross-laminated timber (CLT), OSB or plywood, are JAS certified. Currently, 11 forest products have JAS Standards, and are reviewed at least every five years (for additional information, see [JA7131](#)). JAS certification for products for export to Japan is overseen by the [Registered Overseas Certified Bodies](#) (ROCB).

Although the BSL requires the use of JAS certified dimension lumber for 2x4 construction, MLIT recognizes grading standards of North American grading agencies (e.g., Pacific Lumber Inspection Bureau, Western Wood Products Association, Southern Pine Inspection Bureau, and others) as equivalent to JAS.

The [Japanese Industrial Standards Committee](#) sets voluntary standards, known as Japan Industrial Standards (JIS), for fiberboard, wood-plastic composites, preserved lumber, and fireproof lumber.

#### #7—Sick House Regulations and Formaldehyde Emission Level

To improve air quality of residential houses, in 2003, MLIT amended the BSL and introduced the [Sick House Regulations](#), designed to ban the use of chlorpyrifos (a termite control agent) and regulate levels of formaldehyde emissions in a house. The Sick House regulations set a maximum level of formaldehyde emissions from building materials, including engineered wood products. MLIT uses a four-star F rating system to indicate formaldehyde emission grade of composite wood. The highest (F☆☆☆☆) rating designates the lowest formaldehyde emissions level at or below 0.005 milligrams/(square meters \* hour). Materials with the F☆☆☆☆ rating have no restrictions on indoor application. For glulam, LVL, CLT, OSB, flooring, and plywood, the JAS label identifies the F rating. For medium density fiberboard and particle board, the JIS label indicates the F rating. For other engineered wood products, MLIT may certify formaldehyde emissions levels using the F star system.

#### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.