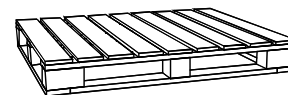


PalletLink Newsletter

technical support for the pallet and case manufacturer & user



Winter 2007/2008

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NEW PALLETLINK WEBSITE LAUNCHED

PalletLink's has launched a brand new website www.palletlink.co.uk which has been completely revised and updated to mark the 10th anniversary of our formation. The site currently contains some 54 pages of information, 98 downloadable Datasheets and over 100 illustrations. It is one of the most comprehensive timber packaging websites available anywhere. It covers wood pallets, cases, crates, potato boxes, roll containers and modern methods of fastening timber packaging. Using QUICK SEARCH it is designed to find information fast and save time.

Some PalletLink members have already received their company password by completing and returning the application form sent just before Christmas and with this are able to freely download all PDF, Excel and Word Datasheets on the site for personal or Company use. If you happen to have mislaid your password application form another is enclosed here otherwise it is also available to download on the JOIN PALLETLINK page as Form 3.

A new innovation on the site is to provide members with easy to use downloadable Excel worksheet programmes for pallet design optimisation. We currently have 2 downloads on site but will be adding others, one example on already is sheet 64a *Bearer pallet weight calculator in 3 species at 3 common moisture contents*. Another due shortly will predict the weakening effect of increasing bearer notch height in a 2-way pallet. If you need any help with using these Excel tools, contact PalletLink. A print from the website page EXCEL TOOLS is attached to this Newsletter to demonstrate the format. You will need MS/Excel to run these programmes.

NAPD

Continuing a long association with us now in its seventh year the NAPD (National Association of Pallet Distributors) has renewed full PalletLink membership and website access for all their members. The NAPD specialises in recycling, repair and reconditioning of pallets and was a main sponsor and contributor to BS EN ISO 18613: 2003: *Pallets for materials handling - repair of flat wooden pallets*.

TIMCON

PalletLink is very pleased to announce that the Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) has established an arrangement whereby its full members can access the new website and extensive specialist technical support facilities available from PalletLink. These are in addition to those services already on offer from TIMCON itself. The diversity of products and services available from TIMCON has expanded considerably in recent years and when allied with PalletLink's technical expertise will give TIMCON members a unique package.

John Dye, President of TIMCON, is delighted by the development and comments: "This initiative is one of the most important in our Confederation's history. By arranging members' access to the exceptional specialist services offered by PalletLink, we are further strengthening our ability to justifiably claim a World Class package for our members".

PalletLink Director John Harvey said of the new arrangement: "We really feel our expertise is being widely acknowledged and look forward to sharing this with TIMCON members".

TIMCON members who are currently also members of PalletLink will in future no longer be invoiced by PalletLink; their membership will be covered by their TIMCON membership.

BSI PKW/0/-11 Wood Panel – TO VOTE NEGATIVE

BSI PKW/0/-11 is the UK committee that controls input into UK and overseas wood packaging standards. On 30 Jan 2008 this Committee, took the decision to vote against all 3 parts of the recently published ISO/DIS 8611 – *Pallet test methods*. Members agreed that it was unacceptable that a key test, Test 1a, the Bending Test, would fail major pallet designs that had proven safety and performance records in the field over many years. PalletLink featured this anomaly in its Winter 2006/7 Newsletter and members of the committee produced test results that confirmed this. The remaining 14 tests were acceptable, but Test 1a is considered to be the critical test. The Committee also found Part 3 to be over complex and confusing and believe that it should be re-written.

There is also unease outside of Europe, Australia, a major user of timber pallets, has also indicated it will vote against the draft.

BACKGROUND TO 8611

ISO 8611 *Pallets for materials handling - test methods* was first published in 1989 in 3 parts and then came out with minor revisions in 1991, it has since then become a yardstick across Europe and other parts of the world for measuring pallet strength. The ISO Bending Test has been a key test.

A new standard that would have legitimised successful pallets with a load rating equal to that used in the field was sought. As we interpret it that has not happened and it would appear that the importance of accommodating these important European pallets was lost sight of. The revision to ISO 8611 was to comprise 3 parts and then, for the first time, to be published jointly as an EN and ISO. An ISO is optional but all EU countries are obliged to publish a new EN as their national standard.

Some time ago the responsible Committee, WG2, had largely agreed on the revisions to the tests as far as wood pallets were concerned but new members who had joined the Committee were not happy with regard to the low ratings achieved by plastic pallets and it was agreed to make amendments to better serve plastic pallets. At the same time it was suggested that testing should be carried out to establish whether a working relationship could be established between the Airbag Bending Test method widely used in the USA and the steel bar Bending Test used elsewhere.

In the end the extensive test programme failed to find a strong correlation and it was finally agreed at the November 2006 meeting of ISO/TC51/WG2 in Bordeaux that the airbag method would have performance requirements withdrawn and the standard would revert to the old steel bar Bending Test method with regard to normative performance.

Having established the problem, what can be done? The UK Committee when making its negative vote will be putting forward

practical suggestions for relatively few amendments that will make them generally acceptable and intelligible. The hope is that the Draft Standards will be returned to the joint CEN/ISO Committee for further consideration.

COUNTRIES REQUIRING ISPM 15

The PalletLink Index for countries requiring ISPM 15 for imported wood packaging was updated on 6 February 2008, you will find it on the website as Datasheet 85i

This index also includes information on non ISPM 15 countries researched at the request of members. That information was correct at the date of the enquiry. We are always prepared to research phytosanitary requirements for members, though it can take some time to receive a response from some countries. EU members do not need ISPM 15 treatment for pallets from UK and these are marked in blue in the list.

THE 463L PALLET

There are a huge number of pallets referred to by shortened names or special codes and numbers. Members are sometimes asked by customers for these unusual pallets which they may not recognise and can often waste a lot of time asking around with no success. Examples are the 463L NATO pallet, the DIN 55423 German plastic pallet for meat, the intumescent (fire resistant) pallet, the Spicer pallet and the anti-static (electrical) pallet. To make it easy for members to find out about them, their specifications and whether, as a traditional timber pallet maker you can manufacture them, we are steadily uploading a range of datasheets to cover them. For example if you now enter any of the following '463' 'Spicer' 'intum' or 'static' into the PalletLink website search engine you will be directed to a page or datasheet that either gives you a specification or at least gives some detail, usually with an illustration. This is an ongoing process and will not be complete until March.

Naturally we will not be producing a datasheet for every unusual pallet but what we have done is to list over 100 of these special codes and numbers in our many downloads and indexes on the site. This means that if you cannot find the specification at least you are pointed to the name and origin of the pallet from the index.

If you still have no success just e-mail or call us as we have a large master database in the office.

NOMINAL LOAD

Nominal load is a new term that is used in pallet standards and the apparent similarity between nominal load, rated load, payload, safe working load (SWL), test load and proof load are causing confusion. Explanation is needed in order to properly understand customers' requests, pallet design software and load test results. We will shortly explain all these terms in a new Datasheet planned for the Palletlink website but here we simply explain the new ISO term 'nominal load' as it appears in ISO/DIS 8611 Part 2: 2007. Firstly when compared with the older term 'rated load' note that they are both very similar in meaning as follows:

Nominal load is specified in kg and established by load testing to ISO 8611. It is the load value for the specified supports (eg. racking) when loaded with a uniformly distributed payload. Once nominal load is established for a pallet design with specified supports, it is fixed and cannot change. However, if it is retested with an

alternative support eg. forklift truck, then it will have a second value of nominal load, probably larger.

Rating or rated-load in the old standard was permanently fixed, there were no alternative supports so there was a single rating for a pallet design. Although this made it easy to compare pallets it meant a severe load penalty for a pallet that was never intended to be racked in that it would quite safely have carried a greater load.

In spite of the negative UK vote for ISO/DIS 8611 there are many things in the standard that the UK do support and the new term 'nominal load' is one of them.

BARK AND WANE - AN UPDATE

Wane is the curved outer surface of the tree exposed when the bark has been removed. Most objections to the presence of wane are based entirely on poor appearance, in fact wane has to be severe to affect functions such as strength and commercial supplies of timber have to reflect what the forest produces. Wood as a natural material produces a range of qualities.

Because more than one country receives the sawn wood shipments from major producers, national grading systems such as those produced by BSI, DIN or EN take second place. Over recent years it has become commonplace to specify "mixed grade" which means a mix of 1st class (square material) with an agreed amount of 2nd class (material with some wane). This is happening with both softwood and hardwood supplies and agreement on what is the acceptable mix, eg. 80/20 and what is an acceptable amount of wane has not been reached. Due to price constraints wood packaging is mostly drawn from the 2nd class material and pallet makers have to set a permissible wane allowance usually varying with individual specifications such as the Europallet or individual customers.

A useful grading system for wane has been published in BS EN 12246: 1999: *Quality classification of timber used in pallets & packaging* which lists two softwood/hardwood grades P1 (top grade) and P2 (lower grade) for pallet and case wood. These grades permit a limited amount of wane and also limit the size of knots, boxed heart and edge pith. Both grades permit unrestricted blue-stain. Although both grades include wane, some commercial pallet specifications do not permit any wane and the standard would have been more useful if had contained a 3rd top grade with all wane eliminated.

Phytosanitary considerations - restrictions for bark and wane are not entirely concerned with appearance. ISPM 15, an international guideline for regulating wood packaging material for international shipment, has an objective of controlling undesirable transmission of biological pests. In an extension of this standard, Australia, the EU, and certain other countries propose that wood packaging be free of bark. Their contention is that bark is a pathway for re-infestation, whether treated or not. The UK already routinely follows this in the Forestry Commission controlled marking programme.

ISPM 15: 2002 definition of Bark Free Wood - Wood from which all bark (excluding the vascular cambium sometimes known as "inner bark", ingrown bark around knots sometimes known as "bark inclusions", and bark pockets between rings of annual growth also known as "bark inclusions") has been removed.

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