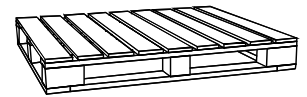


PalletLink Newsletter

Technical support for the pallet and case manufacturer & user



Spring 2008

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ELECTRONIC COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER

For the first time this PalletLink newsletter is also available in downloadable electronic (pdf) format from the NEWS PAGE on www.palletlink.co.uk - it is uploaded to the site at the same time as it is mailed to members. The electronic newsletter is freely available to circulate to your colleagues, customers or to be placed on your Company website.

PLASTICS FAIL UNFAIRLY BY EXCESSIVE DISTORTION

A main criticism of the ISO 8611 test when applied to plastic pallets is that, however good the pallet, it always fails the bottom deck, not usually by breakage but by excessive distortion. The original standard when drafted in 1989 only covered timber pallets but at the last minute it was decided to include plastic pallets and the tests were never properly evaluated for plastics.

The test also sometimes failed the top deck but it was generally accepted that this was more a failing of the pallet than the ISO method and plastic pallet designers set about improving the strength and distortion using innovative methods such as thin steel strips crossing the deck set vertically on edge (flitch) encased within the deck moulding. Another method was to use a stronger (usually more expensive) type of plastic and another was to reduce the percentage of recycled plastic in the mix

The bottom deck test was never properly solved by plastic pallet makers, mainly because it was considered to be an unrealistic test as the ISO load was applied upwards at the very centre of each short span between the blocks. In reality this cannot happen in beam racking, as in properly placed pallets the rack beams will be supporting the outer blocks not the short unsupported bottom span. Placed on shelved racking the bending load on the bottom board is insignificant. The type of load simulated by 8611 can only happen if a loaded pallet was set down on a large stone or discarded batten that coincided with the centre of a bottom deckboard span. The resulting distortion of the bottom deck (which the ISO test would class as a failure) in fact would often save the pallet from breakage. A wood pallet with its extra base stiffness might actually fracture and yet would be able to pass the ISO test.

PalletLink recently tested a new design of injection moulded plastic pallet for an overseas client; once again it passed all the tests with the exception of the bottom deck. Once again this was through distortion. It is to be hoped the ISO 8611 modifications starting in June, will create a test that this time is realistic for plastic pallets.

NEGATIVE VOTE FOR THE NEW DRAFT ISO 8611

All 3 parts of the 2007 draft ISO 8611 pallet testing standard have failed the obligatory worldwide ballot. This prevents publication until issues raised are solved. The UK wood pallet and packaging industry was fully involved in this defence of successful current pallet designs. Once alerted to the possibility of European pallet designs failing the standard - Chep, LPR, Logipal, TIMCON, NAPD, PalletLink and industry suppliers such as UKFPA (UK Forest Products Association) all supported the no-vote. Additionally FEFPEB (European Federation of Wooden Pallet and Packaging Manufacturers) also advised members vote against the document.

This is a victory for common sense and the pallet specialists of the member countries of ISO will meet in June to decide how to rectify the standard. The UK will be represented by John Harvey of

PalletLink and will pursue a simple target that proven timber pallets such as exchange and rental designs should meet the requirements of the new edition of ISO 8611.

For more details of what led up to all this, go to the PalletLink website page PALLETS / PALLET TESTING - Datasheet 21k.

THE CHEP-USA ARP PROGRAMME

CHEP USA started operations during the 1990s, much later than their European operations but problems are surfacing. The *Coalition of North American Pallet Recyclers* have commenced an antitrust class action against CHEP USA claiming that the burden of collecting, sorting, storing and transporting by pallet recycling companies across the United States is being subsidized by recyclers because of the low recovery fee per pallet that CHEP pay.

Independent Pallet recycling companies claim that in the absence of CHEP's own collection infrastructure they have no alternative to the CHEP ARP (Asset Recovery Program) and the majority of recyclers have indicated that CHEP's ARP program does not cover their cost, they say it has remained well short of what it costs for some years. Both sides are expected to argue their case in court this Summer.

IMPRESS CUSTOMERS – SUPPLY DATASHEETS

It looks impressive to customers if technical questions they raise with pallet or packaging companies can be supported by a datasheet on the subject they ask about. PalletLink members are free to print or e-mail and send any of the 110 plus datasheets we have on display on our website www.palletlink.co.uk to customers. All our datasheets are printed in colour, most with a photograph or diagram and all are researched with careful attention to detail such as latest version of standards or regulations. If you are faced with a particular question on a subject our datasheets are considered leaders in the field. There are many datasheets yet to be uploaded so call us if you need a particular missing subject.

HELP YOUR ADMINISTRATION STAFF

We get questions from member companies (often originating from their customers) who are frustrated by some unknown classification or product designation. This might be a customer shipping unit loads to an EU country needing to know the 'EWC code' or 'CN Commodity Code' number for a process or item of wood packaging, or shipping to the USA and needing to know the 'UN Designation' for a semi-hazardous chemical. Customers when stuck on a problem have a habit of calling the pallet maker.

We have responded by producing three Datasheets to cover these problem areas but rather than you searching the 50 plus pages of our site they can more quickly be found by you entering the mystery term into QUICK SEARCH. We have used all popular variations of terms in the sheets so whatever you enter should appear. We have just improved our search engine so it now searches within all 50 pages and all 110 datasheets *without entering your password* and produces a fast result. If having found what you searched for, to see the detail you will then need to enter your password, so it is worthwhile informing all your staff of it, administration staff as well as sales staff. If you search for something that is not there and you feel it should be, then tell us and we will sort it out and e-mail you back with the answer. We would also hope that within a week or so any missing topics will be up on the website for everybody.

PALLETLINK TEST FACILITIES

Demand from Palletlink members for testing services for timber specimens, pallets, boxes and fastenings has led to the installation of new facilities at PalletLink. Until recently we hired specialist laboratory facilities and conducted the tests ourselves, but this arrangement often left clients disappointed with higher prices and long lead times. As an ex-TRADA test-lab manager and UKAS Assessor for timber testing laboratories, PalletLink principal consultant John Harvey had the experience to set up the necessary equipment which is now in place.

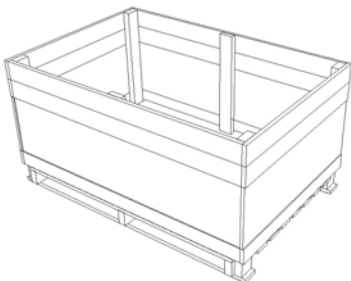
Members have for some time been sending us specimens of timber, sometimes new (to measure strength) and sometimes suspect (for investigation). As part of this we have always undertaken density by the oven dry method and structure examination, but now we can undertake compression and bending tests as well. Members can be assured that most of this is an inclusive free service to them and only the more extensive testing is chargeable and then PalletLink members taking up this service qualify for a 25% reduction in fees over non-members.

Members and clients particularly value the fact that we don't just report that specimens sent for testing 'pass' or 'fail' tests, but offer a more personal service. If we see a product is failing we can halt testing to enter into a dialogue with clients to enable design modifications to ensure that they achieve success in a retest with minimum extra cost. We find non-specialist test labs avoid this because of lack of expertise, but for Palletlink it has always been a routine service to members and clients to evaluate their designs and make a recommendation to ensure that the end product is suitable for purpose, such that the final test is successful.

POTATO BOXES

Most potato boxes are now made to contain 1000 kg and are made from one of the European pines or spruces since these species suit long term (several months) winter storage of the crop and are able to take the very large loads up to eight boxes high in the typical specialist store. We get enquiries on this subject, mostly in relation to problems in meeting BS Class 6 or 8 (6 or 8 high in stack). These loads have to be withstood without respite for several months of indoor storage and experience has shown this loading intensity can only be economically met by timber. Other materials such as recycled thermoplastic have not been successful due to the strength and stiffness under long term load not meeting the BS requirements. The BS 7611 is very important in this market, with buyers almost always requiring a Class 6 or 8 BS 7611 box.

PalletLink have been involved in this field for many years and have an expertise in assessing boxes. We are able to judge whether a design is likely to meet the BS or not. To do so we need full details and small samples from the manufacturer including nails, timber and nailplates. A number of Datasheets are available on our website to help in box design.



For those new in this field we have a few fully tested designs available to members which if followed exactly can avoid a full scale testing programme. One of the more unusual ones we can supply and shown here it is a part-plywood box which achieves a BS Class 8 box without using diagonal wood braces or punched steel nailplates.

PALLETLINK SERVICES

This is the first Newsletter we have produced since our new agreement with TIMCON whereby TIMCON full members automatically become *PalletLink* full members and have full access to all PalletLink member services. For all these new members we have repeated here the free services PalletLink offer.

- Free hotline for technical problems in the packaging field via e-mail, fax, or telephone. The majority of members' technical and sourcing enquiries are dealt with under the free hotline.
- Three times yearly Newsletter mailed to members on current UK, European and Worldwide packaging topics
- Downloadable PDF pallet and packaging datasheets, standards indexes, specifications, safety publications and working software design tools in Excel.
- All sales enquiries received by the office staff here are passed on to PalletLink members nearest to the enquirer.
- Access, via our office, to an unrivalled database totaling 7000 worldwide manufacturers & industry suppliers. This also contains an extensive equipment database including, for example, where to find instrument calibration services.
- Free nail bending strength testing to EN ISO 12777-1 where you supply, we test and we e-mail you the results within a day or so. If you have a product problem we also undertake free timber examinations on your timber specimens or even a full size pallet.
- Downloadable indexes of most National, International and commercial (eg. CP) pallet and packaging standards and specifications, we can advise on whether your product is likely to meet a BSI, EN or ISO Standard requirement. We can also advise on certain popular overseas national standards such as a DIN (German) or NF (French) pallet designs.

KOREAN BOX-PALLET INITIATIVE

There are no international standards to guide manufacturers on construction of industrial timber box-pallets so when The Korean Standards Association proposed a new international standard on this the idea was well supported. PalletLink will coordinate the UK contribution on this so if you would like to be kept up to date let us know and we will put you on the mailing list for the first draft issue.

LESSER-KNOWN PALLETS

We are steadily adding to our series of UK and overseas pallet descriptions and specifications. Apart from the 3 timber Europallets and 9 CP specifications we have already uploaded onto the website specifications for the steel "Y" Euro, VMF glass pallet, Spicer pallet, Dusseldorfer half pallet. We will shortly add several MOD/NATO pallet designs as well.

Michael Jack

It is with the greatest regret that we announce the sudden death of Michael Jack of the Scott Timber Group, Chairman of the NAPD and longstanding PalletLink Member. We offer his family and colleagues our deepest sympathy

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