

Standard Grading Rules for Southern Pine Lumber

Management of Change Form



Background Information

Name of Person Requesting the Change: Multiple

Date of Requested Change: 1Q2024

Request Title: Clarification on Sapwood Decay

Printed Date: 2Q25

Change Category

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal to align with National Grading Rule | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal to align with SPIB governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal to align with ALSC Enforcement Regs | <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal based Resource Monitoring Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal to align with PS 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade Rule - Addition |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Editorial change to existing content | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade Rule – Removal |

Description of Proposed Change

Modify rule book language to formally prohibit sapwood decay in all stress rated grades within the “2021 Standard Grading Rules for Southern Pine Lumber”.

Rationale

Section 131 of the 2021 Standard Grading Rules for Southern Pine Lumber states that: “Sound wood is required for the grades under these rules except as specified in grade descriptions.”.

This statement should sufficiently explain that no type of decay should be allowed in Southern Pine lumber, except when otherwise specified in the grade rule (e.g., heart center decay is allowed to be 1/3 the depth and 1/3 the width in No. 2).

Since sapwood decay can in some situations be a prevalent form of decay within Southern Pine lumber, and the decay continues to spread after the tree is cut, it should be clarified that the defect is not allowed in stress-rated grades. The SPIB has long considered this to be appropriate interpretation of section 131 and the National Grading Rule. Stating it in the Standard Grading Rules further ensures there is no misunderstanding concerning the correct labeling of pieces containing sapwood decay.

Proposal

Modify Section 131 to state:

131. Sound wood is required for the grades under these rules except as specified in grade descriptions. [Sapwood decay is not allowed in stress-rated grades of Southern Pine of lumber.](#)


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Supporting Information

Excerpt of 1995 memo from SPIB Leadership to Field Staff:

	Southern Pine Inspection Bureau, Inc. 4709 SCENIC HIGHWAY • PENSACOLA, FL 32504-9094 850-434-2611 • FAX 850-433-5594
R E L E	August 16, 1979 / March 29, 1995
	SAPWOOD DECAY NOT ALLOWED IN STRESS-RATED GRADES (REVISED)
	To: SPIB Quality Supervisors
	<p>In 1970 the term "decay" was dropped from the grade descriptions in the NGR, and the term "unsound wood" was used in its place. There was no intent to change the type of decay permitted in the dimension grades. In the 1968 rules and earlier editions, the limits for decay in stress-rated grades were described in terms that were clear in limiting decay or unsound wood to the type of decay that occurred in the living tree, i.e., heart center decay, firm red heart, and unsound red heart. Sapwood decay was not permitted in any stress-rated grades of the 1968, 1970, nor in our existing rules.</p>
	<p>Yours very truly,</p> <p>SOUTHERN PINE INSPECTION BUREAU</p>

END FORM