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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Decaying 4x4 Posts Confirm Performance Concerns with Micronized Copper Wood Preservatives**

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Feb. 9, 2009** — Viance has uncovered evidence that micronized copper quaternary (MCQ™) preservative has failed to prevent decay of 4x4 wood posts at several residential subdivisions in the southeastern United States. The decay, verified by Timber Products Inspection (TP), is considered unacceptable for providing long-term structural integrity for residential and commercial uses. Treated 4x4 wood posts commonly are used to support all types of wood and composite lumber decks, as well as fencing, and the severity of the decay on these micronized copper-treated posts raises alarming consumer safety concerns about structures built using micronized copper treated wood.

The decaying 4x4 posts were located in an upscale residential subdivision in a suburb of Atlanta, Ga., and in multiple subdivisions in the vicinity of Baton Rouge, La. Identification end tags still affixed to the posts in all locations confirmed that they were treated with micronized copper quaternary (MCQ™), a type of micronized copper wood preservative, which Osmose® produces and is used to treat lumber sold to builders and consumers in much of the United States through lumberyards and some leading national home center chains.

### **Residential Findings in Southeastern U.S. Show Evidence of Significant Decay**

TP is a leading independent wood products inspection and testing organization and is accredited by American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) and the International Accreditation Service (IAS). TP is responsible for certifying treated lumber and monitoring the proper treatment processes at more than 150 treating facilities across the country. Because of its reputation in the wood products industry, Viance engaged TP to manage, inspect and verify these decay findings.

TP supervised the identification, extraction and testing of posts at all locations. TP's reports describe numerous posts receiving a rating of "less than sound" on the American Wood Protection Association (AWPA) rating scale. The decaying posts from these multiple subdivisions were rated at "9.5," "9" and "8" on the AWPA's scale of 1 to 10. One post removed from the Georgia location was rated a "7," which the AWPA defines

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as having moderate to severe attack with 10 to 30% of the cross sectional area subject to decay. A decay rating of 7 or below is considered unserviceable by the building industry. TP verified that the average preservative penetration and retentions for the samples examined met the current retention requirements outlined in the International Code Council Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) requirements for MCQ products.

According to Lee Gjovik, a widely published independent wood scientist, "Any decay on a post that's only been in service for less than two years represents a significant amount of unexpected decay. Decay ratings of '9' to '9.5' should not occur until after many years of service."

Contractor records indicate that posts at all of these residential subdivisions were installed less than 18 months ago. Older posts treated with alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ), a proven wood preservative introduced into the market in 1992, and in service in similar structures at nearby locations in Georgia and Louisiana, remained 100 percent sound, showing no evidence of decay.

The TP report from the Georgia subdivision indicates that decay is present on the outside zones of the posts, below the ground line, to a depth of nearly one inch on posts. The outer surface of the post provides the greatest structural integrity and is the primary area where wood preservatives are present. The performance of the preservative in the surface zone of the post is critical for the prevention of decay and maintenance of structural integrity. The TP report is available in its entirety at Viance's website: [www.treatedwood.com](http://www.treatedwood.com).

The MCQ-treated wood posts at these residential locations show signs of early decay far beyond what is considered acceptable in the marketplace. Viance, a leading provider of wood preservation technologies, is concerned that decay occurring this early in the service life of wood poses a substantial safety hazard to consumers with structures built from micronized copper-treated wood.

### **An Overview Of Today's Technologies**

Micronized copper-treated wood products were first introduced to the marketplace in 2006. The manufacturers of micronized copper preservatives, Osmose<sup>®</sup>, Arch<sup>®</sup> Wood Protection and PhibroWood<sup>®</sup>, have not submitted any of these products to the AWWA for review or standardization.

In response to the absence of any published performance information, Viance began comparative testing of micronized copper preservatives and ACQ in February 2007. Initial results of its field tests were alarming and were presented to the industry in the spring of 2008, raising concerns about the performance of micronized copper wood preservatives. Viance purchased commercially available ACQ and MCQ-treated products from leading national retail chains for its real-world field testing. After less than one year of exposure and field testing at multiple test sites, the MCQ treated wood failed to deter decay and termites. Viance released its findings in the spring of 2008 to advise treaters, retailers and builders of their safety concerns.

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“When field tests revealed evidence of decay after only nine months, we expected this would lead to failures of micronized copper-treated wood in service,” said Steve Ainscough, President and CEO of Viance. “Once we learned of the severity of decay on these post findings in Georgia and Louisiana, we sought independent, third-party experts to evaluate them, because the failures of these micronized copper-treated wood products pose serious safety concerns for consumers. Viance is deeply committed to the wood protection industry and follows a comprehensive long term performance evaluation process before bringing new preservatives to the market”.

These latest in-service findings corroborate the results of Viance’s ongoing field tests, which were presented to the lumber and building industries in the spring of 2008 and can be downloaded in their entirety at [www.treatedwood.com](http://www.treatedwood.com)

The recent decay findings of these micronized copper-treated wood products in residential locations also indicate that many environmental and lifecycle marketing claims may be unsubstantiated. The rate of accelerated decay on these posts highlights that the durability and the lifecycle claims and certifications for these products should be reevaluated.

Viance remains committed to providing its customers and consumers with the latest information and updates about ongoing investigations regarding the performance of micronized copper-treated products. The decay present in micronized copper-treated wood within such short periods of time has been much more aggressive and rapid than wood preservatives previously brought to market for residential use. These findings provide evidence that micronized copper-treated wood is prone to premature decay, and Viance believes that its continued use raises serious consumer safety concerns.

*Viance LLC provides an extensive range of advanced wood treatment technologies and services to the global wood treatment industry. With an expertise in wood biocides and wood protection chemicals, Viance provides high-level product support to its customers to provide innovative, advanced solutions that improve the performance and durability of wood and wood products. Viance is a joint venture between Rohm and Haas Company and Chemical Specialties, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Rockwood Holdings, Inc. For more information about wood treatment technology and Viance products, visit [www.treatedwood.com](http://www.treatedwood.com).*

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