



# Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For up-to-date PSHB information please visit the Department’s webpage  
[www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer).

The Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) is available on **(08) 9368 3080** and  
[padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au). Reports of suspect borers can be made to PaDIS or reported via  
the Department’s **MyPestGuide Reporter app or webpage**, see:  
[mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au)

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## Quarantine Area

A Quarantine Area Notice (QAN) has been issued under regulation 60 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Regulations 2013*. This Quarantine Area is defined by the following Local Government Authority boundaries:

City of Canning	City of South Perth	Town of Claremont
City of Cockburn	City of Stirling	Town of Cottesloe
City of Fremantle	City of Subiaco	Town of East Fremantle
City of Melville	City of Vincent	Town of Mosman Park
City of Nedlands	Shire of Peppermint Grove	Town of Victoria Park
City of Perth	Town of Cambridge	

Further information, the QAN, maps and a list of susceptible host plants are available on the webpage: [www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer).

### What material does the Quarantine Area Notice apply to?

The QAN applies to wood, green waste and plant material.

**Wood** means wood that is not treated and in use for construction, fencing and furniture.

**Green waste** includes cut branches or prunings, bark, firewood, plant mulch or wood chips.

**Plants** means any plant, organ or plant part (including plant cutting) with woody stems that are greater than 2cm in diameter.

### Does this include grass clippings?

No, the borer does not affect grass so lawn clippings can be disposed of as normal.

### What are the requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice?

To stop the potential spread of PSHB a number of restrictions have been put in place, these include:

- Movement of wood and plant material within the QA is unrestricted.
- Wood must be chipped to pieces that are less than 2.5cm in diameter before leaving the QA.
- Living plants with woody stems greater than 2cm must not leave the QA.
- Machinery used to handle green waste must be cleaned of wood material prior to leaving the QA.

### What if I cannot meet these requirements?

A permit is required if you are unable to meet the requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice.

The permit process includes an inspection from an authorised officer whereby they conduct a risk assessment and issue a permit if certain conditions can be met.

### Is there a cost to obtain a permit?

No, there is no cost to apply for or be issued with a permit.

### How do I apply for a permit?

To schedule an inspection and commence the permit process, email [pshb@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:pshb@dpird.wa.gov.au) with the following information.

- Your name and contact details
- Business name (if applicable)
- Details of the material you wish to move
- Locations where you wish to move the material from/to.
- Date you wish to undertake the movement of wood or plant material.

## Movement of wood and plant material

### Will my local council continue collecting green waste (bins and verge collections)?

Yes, DPIRD has worked with local government to ensure their waste management processes transport material securely and dispose of waste in a manner that mitigates the risk of spreading PSHB.

### I have a skip bin, full trailer, excess/bulk waste, etc. How can I dispose of this?

If the waste is located within the Quarantine Area you will need to dispose of it at a facility that is also located within the Quarantine Area.

In certain cases, waste can be disposed of at a facility outside the Quarantine Area if that facility has been issued a Pest Control Notice. To see a list of facilities with a Pest Control Notice refer to <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer>.

### Can I bring firewood, host plants etc, into the QA?

Yes, firewood or host plants can enter the QA, but they cannot leave the QA. It is not our recommendation to introduce further potential host species or host material into the QA during the course of the PSHB incident response.

If unintentional or inappropriate disposal of PSHB host plants and material occurs, or is suspected to have occurred, please contact the Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS).

**Assist with inspections as/if required.** Property inspections have started and are being prioritised closest to detection sites. Reports of borer activity across the area are helping to inform inspection activities and prioritisation.

**Report suspect borer activity** to the Department ([MyPestGuide](#) or PaDIS). If your situation changes or you find anything you think was missed during an inspection, please contact us. See our webpage on what to look for. <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer>.

Reports can be made via:

- MyPestGuide Reporter app or webpage, see: <https://mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au/reporter/#/>
- Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) (08) 9368 3080 or [padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au)

## **I deliver firewood and live in the QA, is this OK?**

You may need to modify your activities. Once firewood enters the QA it cannot leave the QA.

Your vehicle, machinery, and equipment must be cleared of wood material before leaving the Quarantine Area.

**Machinery** at risk of spreading PSHB means any vehicle, equipment or other mechanical apparatus of any kind that has been used in relation to arboriculture, gardening, mulching, wood chipping or handling of any other wood.

Transiting / driving through the QA is allowed, providing the firewood/wood material is not sourced from inside the QA.

## **I trade/sell plants and my business is located within the Quarantine Area, can I still sell plants?**

Yes, you can continue to sell plants as long as you meet the requirements of the Quarantine Area.

Living plants with woody stems greater than 2cm must not leave the QA.

If someone who lives outside the QA purchases a plant from you, they must apply for a permit before moving the plant.

## **Wood, timber and furniture**

### **Does PSHB pose a risk to stacked timbers, wooden decking, wooden outdoor furniture, or timbers in my home? Can I remove these from my property?**

We would not expect PSHB to affect these products, but there are other borer species and insect pests that may. If you see evidence of borer damage, report it so it can be assessed. If you need to move these products, please contact PaDIS to discuss your situation so it can be assessed.

The greatest risk of moving PSHB is through the movement of host plants and their associated plant material (bark, cuttings, logs, fresh mulch etc). If timbers or limbs are being

cut from these host plants and used for furniture or wood work, then these products pose a risk of transporting the borer.

### **What are the implications and restrictions for sawmillers, woodturners and those who handle/process green timber in log form and convert it to boards?**

Untreated or recently felled timber (less than 1 year) can be PSHB host material. PSHB is known to infest and survive in felled logs for up to a year, but this varies greatly by species. For this reason, we encourage those who handle/process green timber to contact us for an inspection and relevant permitting so that we can make a suitable risk assessment.

## **Activities to control the spread of PSHB**

### **If I report borers, or you find borers in my tree, are you going to cut it down? – how would you sample for borers?**

The presence of borers does not necessarily result in removal of the plant or tree unless it poses a significant risk to safety or the spread of this exotic pest. When an infected tree is detected, they are risk assessed by subject matter experts including entomologists, pathologists and arborists.

**Tree health enquiries are complex** - sampling trees and plants for borers (and/or the associated fungus) is a complex task, and given the size of some trees, sampling and investigations will have certain challenges. Sampling and inspections will be done by our field staff with guidance and assessments by various subject matter experts. If you have any concerns, please raise these with the inspecting officers.

### **If you take samples, or look at my sick tree, will you tell me what's wrong with it?**

Unfortunately, this won't often be possible. A large amount of information needs to be assessed, the priority is to confirm or exclude the presence of PSHB. Tree health enquiries are complex, and tree deaths often have multiple contributing factors including both pest and disease issues, and environmental stresses. Our field staff have varied backgrounds and are not being asked to diagnose resident's tree health issues. Our capacity to provide comment on individual properties may be limited. If you have concerns, please raise these with the inspecting staff or contact PaDIS so the situation can be discussed.

### **Is there a spray or chemical treatment I can use to prevent my trees from PSHB?**

No, unfortunately there is nothing currently registered for use in Australia.

The beetles don't directly feed on the tree so systemic pesticides are not effective. Bark sprays do not penetrate the tree enough to reach the beetle.

There is no known insecticide treatment that will suppress a PSHB infestation for an extended period. There is also no known fungicide treatment that would inhibit fungal growth enough to suppress beetle reproduction.

DPIRD is currently liaising with colleagues in California and South Africa to understand the latest research on treatment and preventative options.

### Will my property be inspected? Will all properties in the QA be inspected?

Property inspections and surveillance will be concentrated close to the detection points, with additional surveillance activities in the QA and broader area.

Surveillance and inspection activities will be guided by an overarching surveillance strategy, and this plan will evolve as information is gathered. Operational priorities can shift, and the frequency and requirements for inspection are subject to review on an ongoing basis. We appreciate these activities may cause disruptions and we thank everyone for their understanding.

If field staff visit your property, or leave a contact card, please respond promptly.

If your property has not been inspected, don't worry. Please inspect your trees and report any signs of borers or borer activity. If your situation changes, please advise an inspecting officer or contact PaDIS.

### What are you doing during the inspections? / What will you be looking for?

Activities carried out by DPIRD in the Quarantine Area include:

- An initial visit from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) personnel to check for the presence of PSHB host plants and borer activity.
- Inspection of properties to ensure PSHB infected material is removed and disposed of in accordance with the Quarantine Area Notice.
- Installation and monitoring of PSHB traps.
- Subsequent visits to inspect for borer activity, and monitoring of traps.
- Where required, removal of PSHB infested trees that pose a safety risk due to their advanced infestation level.

### What can I plant that is safe from PSHB?

PSHB has a known host range of more than 400 plant species.

**Reproductive hosts** are more likely to be damaged by PSHB, some may even die.

**Non-reproductive hosts** are not recorded as supporting beetle reproduction. They can often tolerate PSHB damage.

Maples, Oaks and Acacias have been reported to have a high percentage of PSHB reproductive hosts. It is recommended to avoid planting Box elder maple (*Acer negundo*) trees as these are preferred by PSHB.

Some native species *may* be less susceptible – but there are no guarantees. The reproductive host range of PSHB in WA is still being determined.

Myrtaceae species are mostly non-reproductive and not attacked. No damage has been detected in WA to date on peppermint trees (*Agonis flexuosa*). Paperbarks (*Melaleuca* spp.) have also shown no signs of PSHB damage or attack in WA to date.

### **What about COVID?**

Please advise any visiting staff if you are sick, awaiting COVID test results or under quarantine orders.

Staff will be following COVID safe practices and will be following any relevant COVID health advice from WA Health authorities. If there is a COVID lockdown, there will be disruptions to normal activities and operational activities will be reassessed in response to any COVID restrictions that occur.

### **Important disclaimer**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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