

Guidance Note

Treated Wooden Poles Structural (SANS 457) vs Non-structural (SANS 1288)



South African Wood Preservers Association

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Treated wooden poles (excluding utility poles) can be produced under either SANS 457 or SANS 1288. (Please note that SANS 457-2 is applicable to softwood, e.g. Pine and SANS 457-3 is applicable to hardwood, e.g. Eucalyptus/gum).

The difference between the SANS 457 and SANS 1288 standards is that SANS 1288 only covers the preservative treatment requirements when the physical strength or visual requirements specified in SANS 457 cannot and will not be met. SANS 1288 poles do not and cannot comply with the visual and physical strength requirements, whether because of drying or mechanical defects (or both).

SANS 1288 poles are therefore classified as non-structural poles and shall not be used as structural poles. SANS 457 poles are classified as structural poles intended for the pole types and end uses specified in SANS 457-2 and SANS 457-3, i.e. building poles, agricultural poles, fencing poles, and guard rail posts.

The allowance for treating poles under SANS 1288 was only permitted from 2000 onwards. This was to allow for the use of treated poles not in compliance with SANS 457 in applications such as ranch style outdoor furniture or other applications where a crooked/curved natural looking pole was required by the purchaser on request. Proper preservative treatment and protection against biological agents such as decay fungi and wood destroying insects would still be ensured in accordance with SANS 1288

The SANS 1288 pole treatment allowance is therefore only for special requests/orders and needs, and not for general retail purposes where the end-user/consumer can potentially purchase a pole, and then use it in an application where it could fail and cause harm or damage due to non-compliance with the physical strength requirements specified in SANS 457.

Note – Utility poles, i.e. transmission, communication, and street lighting poles are covered under SANS 753 for selected Pine species and under SANS 754 for Eucalyptus species.

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For more information on preservative treated timber, contact SAWPA at 011 974 1061 or admin@sawpa.co.za, or visit our website at www.sawpa.co.za