



FACT SHEET

Termite Management - after moving in

This Fact Sheet is designed to provide existing homeowners with basic advice on termite management. (A separate BSA Fact Sheet titled "*Termite Management – What Owners Need To Know*" is available to help consumers about to build understand termite management systems and choices).

It is important to understand that properly installed and maintained termite management systems impede and discourage termite entry into buildings. They do not prevent termite attack. Homeowners should know or find out what type of termite management system has been installed in their home – *chemical or physical* (e.g. concrete slabs, exposed slab edge, metal shielding, stainless steel mesh or graded stone) – or if *termite resistant materials* have been used. Generally, physical barriers are designed to last for the lifetime of the building. Chemical barriers, on the other hand, have a limited life and therefore require a higher degree of maintenance and replenishment. Termite management is required from below and around the perimeter of the building.

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) requires that a notice be placed on the building which describes the type of termite management system installed, the date of installation, and, in the case of chemical barriers, the life expectancy of the barrier. This notice is usually installed in the electrical meter box. Since 1 January 2001, there has been a requirement for a second notice to be fixed on the building.

TERMITE MANAGEMENT - *How to Reduce the Risks* - The DOs and DON'Ts

Proper, regular maintenance of the termite management system is essential to minimise the opportunity for termite attack. The house should be inspected at least annually by a BSA licensed pest controller. More frequent inspections may be required in high risk areas (e.g. where there is a great number of trees or virgin bush nearby). Check the pest controller's licence with BSA before engaging them. In addition to these regular professional inspections, owner vigilance including occasional checks, is important.

Homeowners need to be careful not to compromise any chemical treatment or disturb a physical barrier which has been installed in their home. The most frequent cause of termites entering a structure is where a perimeter barrier has been breached thus rendering it ineffective. From 1 January 2001, where a chemical perimeter barrier has been installed, a concrete protection strip of at least 300mm wide is required around the home. It is important not to disturb this protection. Some common practices which may increase the risk of termite problems include:

- * placing turf, paving, concrete paths, bark and garden beds up against the house wall (such work may necessitate the re-establishment of the termite barrier by a qualified pest controller);
- * leaving loose timber stacked up or leaning against the house;
- * the installation of new services involving underground connections to the house (e.g. pay TV) after the original termite management system has been installed;
- * the construction of a pergola (75mm clearance is recommended between the finished ground or pavement level and the bottom of the timber posts); and
- * the construction of fences, carports, or garages attached to the house after the termite management system has been installed.

Special care should be taken to protect the 'weep holes' (vertical joints between bricks close to ground level that are left open to allow any moisture to escape outside the house). 100mm

clearance is recommended from the bottom of any weep hole to the top of the garden bed, or 75mm clearance in the case of concrete or unit paving.

IDENTIFICATION – How to find out if you've got a problem

Inside the house: In particular, check areas such as skirting boards, architraves, and timber door and window frames. Look for blistered and bubbled paint, rippled or bulging wall linings, skirting and architraves, and coarse, sandy pellet residues known as 'frass' (termite excreta).

Outside the house: Check for mud galleries (small mud tunnels) against the walls, and tell-tale paths leading up the foundation posts into the home.

If you have any doubts or concerns about termite activity, arrange an inspection by a BSA licensed pest controller.

DEALING WITH TERMITES - Who to contact and what to do

- * *Don't* disturb the nest
- * Immediately arrange a thorough inspection by a BSA licensed pest controller (ask the pest controller to locate the point of entry and to provide a written report)
- * Inform your neighbours because one termite colony can affect several homes
- * If the pest controller indicates there may be a fault in the installation of the barrier, contact the builder
- * Contact the nearest BSA office
- * Take action to eradicate the termites

NOTE: BSA's Statutory Insurance Scheme protects new homes for 6 years and 6 months from the date of signing a building contract. For 'spec' homes, the 6 years and 6 months insurance period applies from the date when work commenced on site. Insurance protection does NOT apply if the homeowner's action or lack of maintenance has contributed to the infestation. If an infestation occurs more than 6 years and 3 months after completion, and the problem can be traced to faulty installation, homeowners may have redress through the Common Law legal system.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

Download a copy of BSA's publication "Termite Management Systems or contact the following organisations:

Timber Research and Development Advisory Council (TRADAC) 3358 1400

Queensland Master Builders Association 3404 6444

Housing Industry Association 1902 973 555

Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association (AEPMA) 03 9597 0664

Department of Primary Industries 13 25 23

Building Codes Queensland 3237 1714 or 3237 1712

Standards Australia (AS 3660.1) 1300 654 646