

How to protect your home against termites

Termites, or white ants, can cause serious problems for home and building owners. Infestations of termites can result in costly damage to the timber parts of your home.

If you're a homeowner or about to undertake a building project, it is important to know how to protect against termites. Ask your builder what termite management systems are most suitable for your home.

Before choosing your preferred method, consider these questions:

Is your building in an area where there is a risk of termite attack?

Almost every part of Queensland is prone to termite attack. However, if you are in Rockhampton, or further north, the risk is greater, so should consider a higher level of protection.

When is the best time to plan for termite management?

Talk to your builder or designer during the planning stage. Your options reduce once you've started building. If you want a higher level of protection, make sure it is written in your building contract. Your builder must then meet these requirements.

What parts of the building need to be protected?

As a minimum, builders need to meet the termite management requirements in the *Building Code of Australia* (BCA).

In Queensland, the BCA states that a termite management system is required if any of the

following components are made of materials susceptible to termite attack:

- walls (structural elements)
- roof (structural elements)
- floor framing (structural elements)
- door jambs
- window frames
- reveals
- architraves, and
- skirting

However, even if these elements of your building are not susceptible, you should still consider installing a termite management system to protect other elements such as cabinets, wall linings, furniture and sheathing on electrical wiring.

What methods of termite management are available?

Several options, both physical and chemical, are available with varying costs, durability and maintenance requirements. They include:

- using a concrete slab and an associated approved method to protect any penetrations to the slab, such as waste pipes etc.
- using chemicals under the slab and around the outside of the completed building
- using graded stone under the slab and around the perimeter
- installing stainless steel mesh under the slab and around the outside

- incorporating termite-resistant materials, such as naturally termite-resistant timber, treated timber, masonry, steel, concrete or fibre-reinforced cement
- a combination of the above, especially if your home has different types of construction or is split-level.

How should I maintain my termite management system?

- First, find out what termite management system your building has, and how it works
- inspect the system regularly yourself, and have a QBCC-licensed pest controller inspect and report every 12 months (every 6 months in high risk areas)
- keep following the maintenance instructions of your builder or manufacturer.

How will future users of the building know how to maintain the termite management system?

Where a termite management system is required, the BCA requires that two copies of a durable notice are fixed permanently to the building in a prominent place. This is usually in the electrical meter box and one other location.

The notice must contain:

- the method/s of termite protection used on the building, and
- the date of installation, and
- where chemicals are used, the life expectancy listed on the National Registration Authority label, and
- recommendations for future termite inspections.

Need more information?

Download a copy of QBCC's publication "Termite Management Systems" from www.qbcc.qld.gov.au or call QBCC on 139 333.