

We're about to move in.

What do we need to know about managing termites?



Inspect...
inspect...
inspect!...

Termites tend to attack houses from underground. What most people don't know is that termite barriers built into houses don't actually stop termites getting in, they just make them easier to see. The barriers are inspection systems rather than prevention systems. Regular inspections use the barriers to look for termite entry at pre-determined locations. If found, they can be treated.

Regular inspections are important because avoiding them can be very expensive. For instance, household insurance doesn't normally cover termite damage. Building insurance and warranties can also be invalidated. This means you pay for the damage.

Who's at risk?

Nearly all houses in Australia are at risk of termite attack, not just timber ones. A CSIRO study found that steel framed and masonry houses have virtually the same risk of attack. Termites can also damage plasterboard, carpets, plastics, books, artwork, clothing & fitout timbers.



*"Who's house are you eating at tonight?"
"Take your pick, they all look the same to me
...there's always something worth eating!"*

Common types of Barriers that Assist Inspections.

- Concrete slab (slab) – solid concrete unit constructed to prevent termite penetration.
- Crushed stone (stone) – layer of stone particles too hard and heavy for termites to penetrate.
- Sheet capping (cap) – sheet material (e.g. metal) used as an isolated or continuous subfloor barrier.
- Stainless steel mesh (mesh) – termite proof mesh used as an isolated or continuous barrier.
- Chemicals (chem) – periodic application of chemicals around/under buildings to repel/kill termites.



What type of barrier system does your house have?

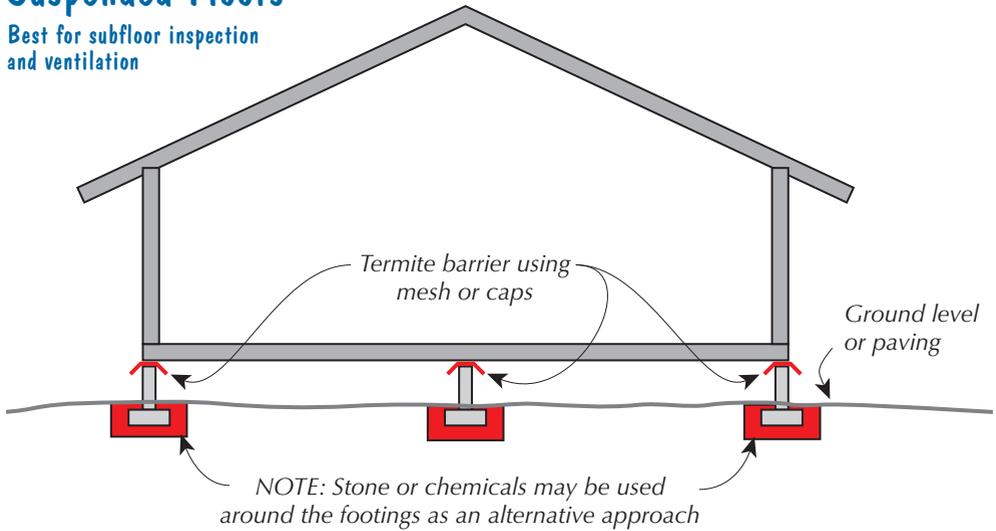
You can check the type of barrier used in your house by referring to the "Notice of Treatment". It is commonly fixed in the electrical meter box or near the subfloor access door.

Popular Termite Barrier Types

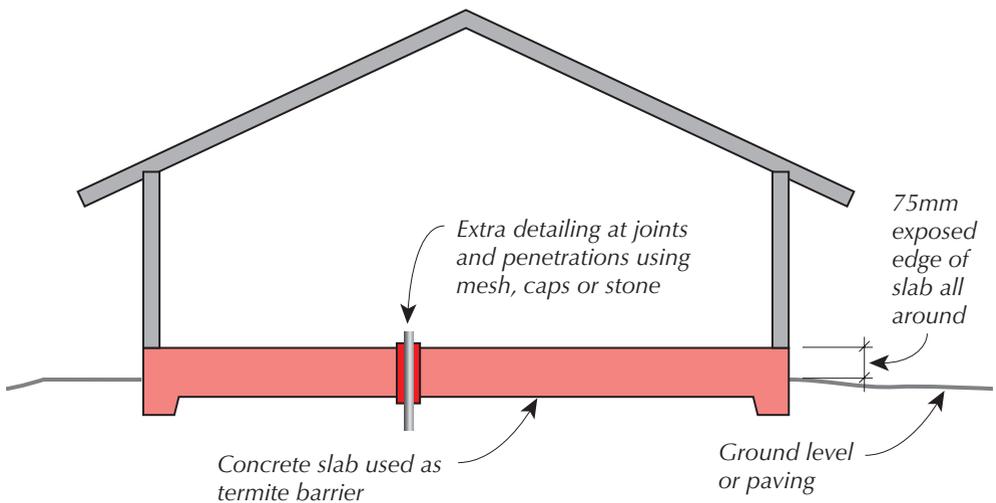
- Notes: 1. Some Councils have special requirements about what types of barriers can be used.
2. Barrier types other than those shown here may also have been used.
3. Red shading in diagrams indicates termite barrier locations.

Suspended Floors

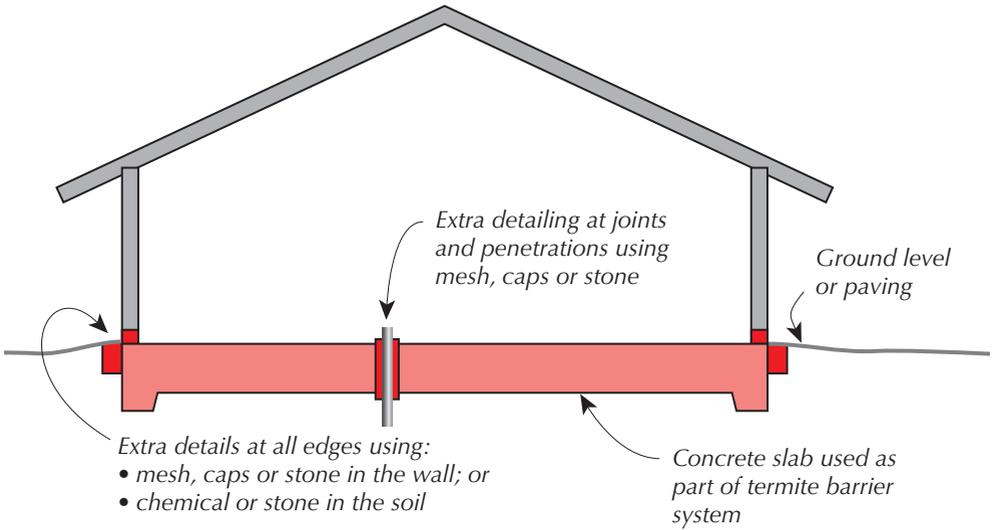
Best for subfloor inspection and ventilation



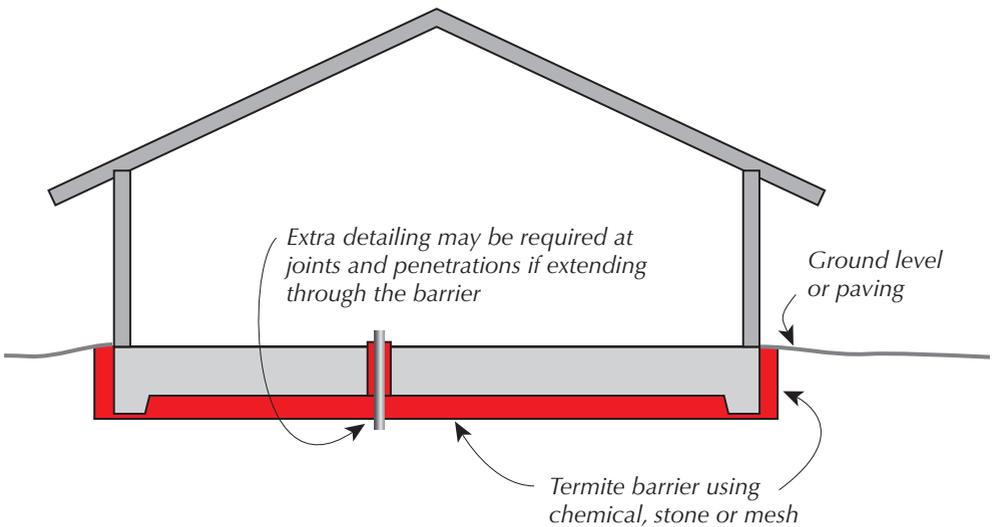
Slab On-Ground with Exposed Edge



Slab On-Ground with Covered Edge



Slab On-Ground with Separate Barrier Beneath



About Inspections.

Question : **How often should I get inspections done?**

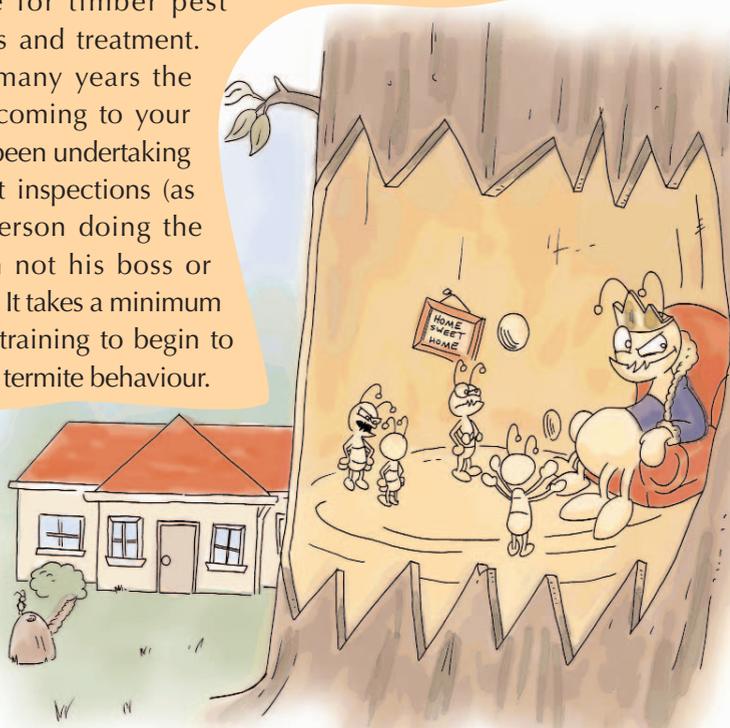
Answer: The “Notice of Treatment” provides site specific guidance on this issue. At a general level, Australian standard AS3660.2 recommends a maximum of 12 monthly intervals. More frequent inspections are recommended for high risk locations.

Question: **What are high risk locations?**

Answer: That depends on where the house is in Australia, how close the house is to food and nesting sources, how well the house can be isolated from adjacent buildings, and if the barrier has been disturbed by recent earth works or landscaping. It is best to ask a pest manager for detailed advice. Find them in the yellow pages.

Question: **How do I choose a Pest Manager?**

Answer: Each state and territory has different levels of competency required to obtain a pest management license, so you need to ask some extra questions. Ask if they have professional indemnity insurance for timber pest inspections and treatment. Ask how many years the inspector coming to your house has been undertaking timber pest inspections (as he’s the person doing the inspection not his boss or supervisor). It takes a minimum of 2 years training to begin to understand termite behaviour.



About Maintenance of Barriers.

Question: I want to do some exterior paving and make some garden beds, does that pose a problem?

Answer: Don't let paving, mulch or garden bed heights cover barriers, weep holes or inspection zones such as slab edges. Seek additional advice for paving in the Northern Territory and Queensland as paving is required to protect chemical soil treatments but must be positioned correctly.



Question: I have a chemical soil barrier, when does it have to be re-applied?

Answer: Chemical barriers don't last the life of the building. Best to refer to the "Notice of Treatment" usually fixed at the entrance to the subfloor or the electrical meter box for details. Call a pest manager for re-treatment as required but remember inspections are still required at 12 monthly intervals (maximum) irrespective of re-application periods.

Question: What type of timber can I use for landscaping?

Answer: Use only treated timber or naturally termite resistant timber. Other timbers only encourage termite attack. Your timber supplier can help, or refer to www.timber.org.au for details on appropriate timbers.

Question: What do I need to look out for when adding a deck or balcony to the house?

Answer: Ensure the structure is either isolated from the main house or has a barrier system that integrates with the house barrier. Ensure that stairs, posts, landings and porches can be inspected for termites.

Questions: Will storing things under the house cause a problem?

Answer: Don't store termite food such as firewood, newspaper, timber or cardboard. Don't let any stored items create hidden pathways to the structure above or the interior of the house. Don't let stored items block termite inspection access or subfloor ventilation.

Question: Does rendering or painting the exposed edge of my concrete slab pose a problem?

Answer: These treatments potentially allow hidden termite entry behind the paint film or render. It's best to avoid these practices if at all possible.

Question: Where can I get more advanced guidance on barrier maintenance?

Answer: Get advice from your pest manager during the next inspection. Find them in the yellow pages.

Extra precautions you can take.

- Request that your neighbour assesses suspicious trees on adjoining properties for termite nests, then control any activity,
- Obtain termite protection insurance which typically involves regular inspections, monitoring and treatment as part of the insurance package,
- Install bait monitoring stations around the building to help detect termite activity.

**Remember...
termite barriers are no good
without regular inspection
and maintenance.**



"Eat up lads... no one's checked this house for years!"

For additional assistance, please contact;

NEW SOUTH WALES
Timber Development Association. Tel: (02) 9360 3088.

QUEENSLAND
Timber Queensland. Tel: (07) 3358 1400.

VICTORIA
Timber Advisory Centre. Tel: (03) 9875 5010.
Timber Promotion Council. Tel: (03) 9665 9255.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Timber Development Association. Tel: (08) 8297 0044.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Timber Advisory Centre. Tel: (08) 9380 4411.

TASMANIA
Tasmanian Timber. Tel: (03) 6324 3133.



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