

We're about to build.

What do we need to know about dealing with termites?

*Get out there boys!
...every new home is a
possible new dinner menu!*



A Managed Approach is Best!

There are more than three hundred and fifty species of termites but only six cause economic damage to houses. All six attack houses from underground.

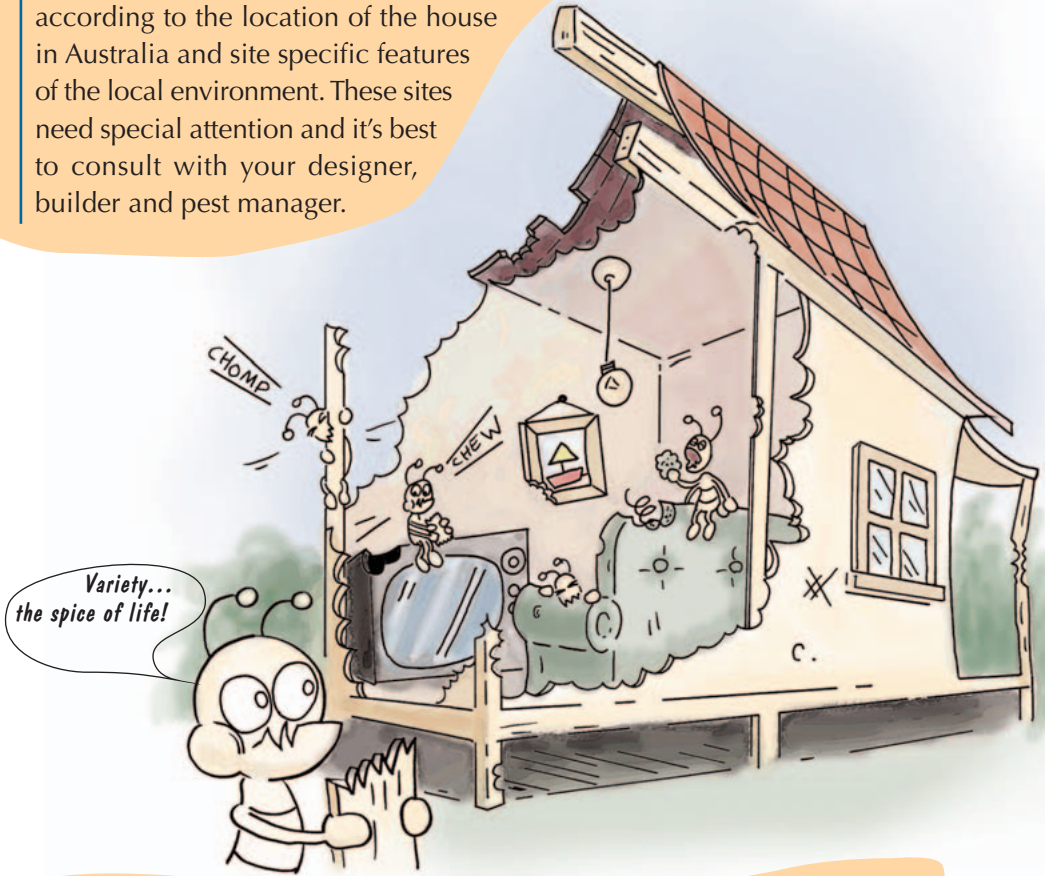
The emphasis of current building regulations is on managing termites through barrier systems and inspections rather than environmentally harmful methods of the past.

This brochure helps you make informed decisions about selecting an appropriate termite management system.

Who's at risk?

The risk of major damage is very low but all types of houses are at risk. A recent CSIRO study found that steel and masonry houses had virtually the same chances of attack as timber houses. Termites can also damage plasterboard, carpets, plastics, books, artwork, clothing and fitout timbers.

The potential risk of attack also varies according to the location of the house in Australia and site specific features of the local environment. These sites need special attention and it's best to consult with your designer, builder and pest manager.



What kind of Termite Management System do I need?

The key priority is to provide a system that addresses the whole of the house, not just the structural elements. This usually consists of a barrier system built into the construction that is designed to assist termite inspections once the house is occupied. Other features can also be added for high risk sites.

The Golden Rule ...design the house for easy Inspection!

What most people don't know is that termite barriers don't actually stop termites getting into the house, they just stop hidden entry. The barriers are inspection systems rather than prevention systems. Regular inspections use the barriers to look for termite entry at pre-determined locations then termite activity can be controlled as required.



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.

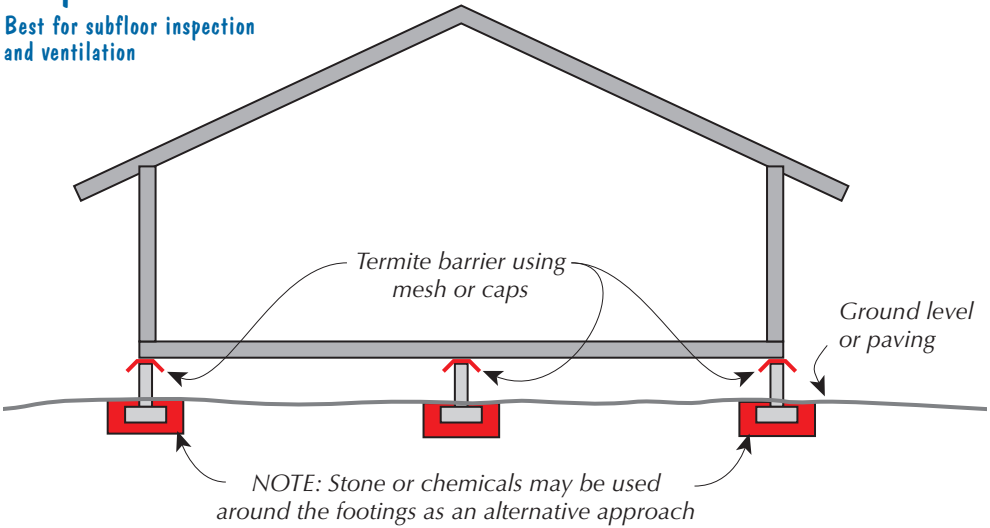


Popular Termite Barrier Types.

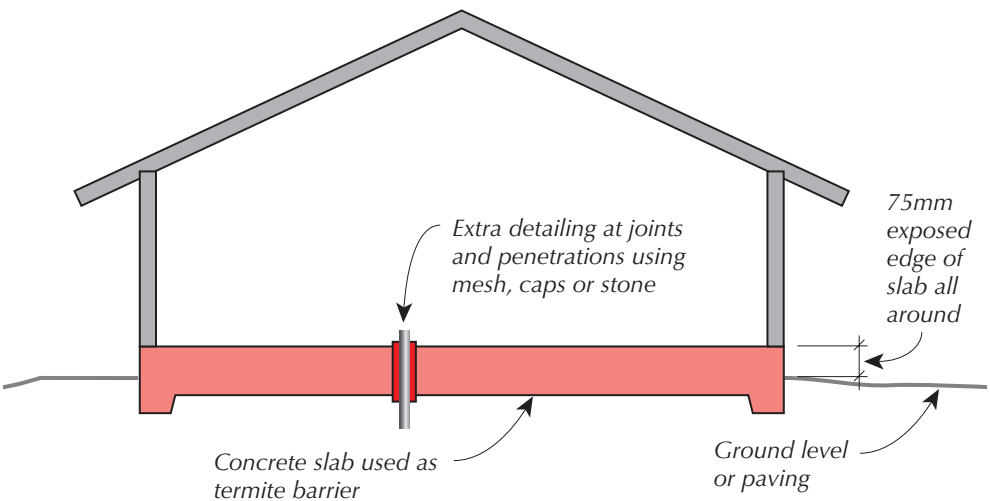
- Notes: 1. Some Councils have special requirements about what types of barriers can be used.
2. Barrier types other than those shown here may also have been used.
3. Red shading in diagrams indicates termite barrier locations.

Suspended Floors

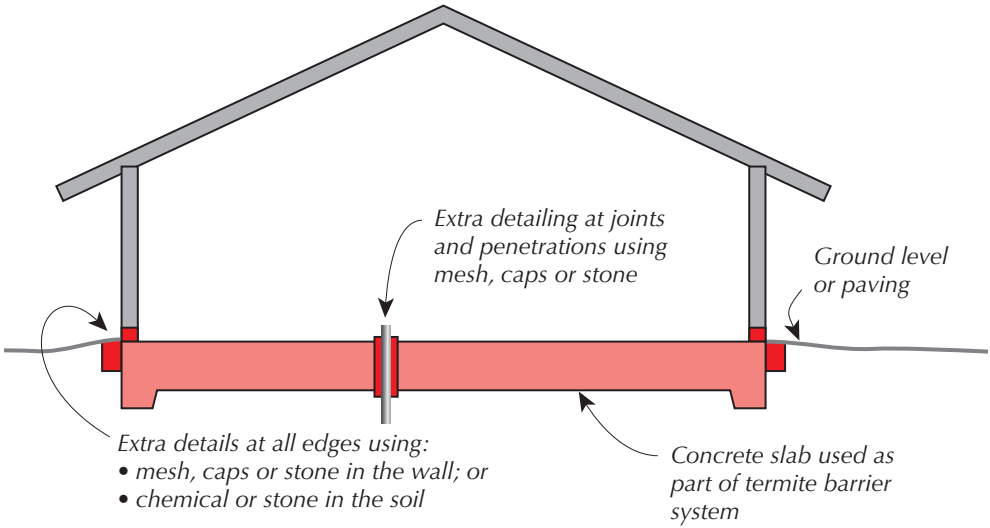
Best for subfloor inspection and ventilation



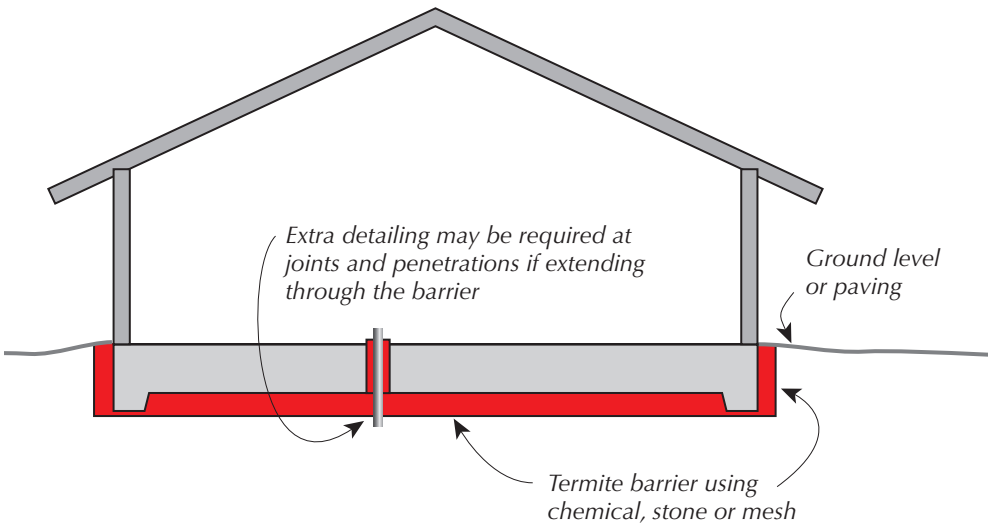
Slab On-Ground with Exposed Edge



Slab On-Ground with Covered Edge



Slab On-Ground with Separate Barrier Beneath



Inspection and Maintenance Responsibilities.

Whatever you've decided to do in the way of termite barriers, its effectiveness is entirely dependent on regular inspections once you've moved in. No termite management system works properly without inspection. Australian Standard AS3660.2 indicates that inspections be conducted at intervals of not more than 12 months – more frequent inspections are strongly recommended.

Maintenance of barriers is also important and this means taking care not to undo the builder's good work. Problems tend to occur with landscaping works such as paving, mulch and garden beds next to the house. For instance the barriers can get damaged during the landscaping construction (especially chemical barriers). The finished paving, mulch and garden beds can often cover the barriers giving a hidden pathway for termite entry into the house. It is therefore best to plan landscaping work right at the start of construction, at the same time as selecting a barrier system.

Other maintenance issues are also important but perhaps best left until your ready to move in. There's another information brochure for this called "We're moving in. What do we need to know about managing termites?"





Special Considerations for High Risk Building Sites.

As mentioned previously, some building sites pose a greater natural risk of termite attack than others. Ways to identify high risk sites include:

- Large and established sources of termite food and nesting near the site (e.g. established bushland) increases the likelihood of termites.
- Permanently damp ground increases the ability of termites to attack, i.e. they can more readily build mud tunnels from the ground into the house.
- The further north in Australia, the greater the prevalence of termites.
- When building right up to the boundary, inspections may not be possible from the neighbour's property, thus increasing the risk of hidden attack.
- When adding house extensions, problems such as barrier continuity, subfloor ventilation and subfloor access may increase the risk of attack.

If you find yourself saying yes to any of these issues, then it's best to plan to deal with them before building. Consult your builder, designer and pest manager because you may need to do more than the minimum requirements.

Tips on things you can do for High Risk Sites.

- Consider open or at least well ventilated subfloors,
- Ensure good inspection access and crawl space under the house,
- Provide good surface drainage to keep the subfloor area dry,
- Use treated timber framing to minimise the materials at risk,
- Isolate structures such as decks and balconies from the main structure, i.e. if the barrier systems can't be integrated smoothly with the main building,
- Inspect for termites at less than the maximum 12 monthly intervals
- Get termite protection insurance - this typically includes scheduled inspections, monitoring and financial cover against damage.
- Get detailed advice from a pest manager. Find them in the yellow pages but before choosing, ask if they have professional indemnity insurance for timber pest inspection and treatment. Ask how many years the inspector coming to the 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 start to understand termite behaviour.

In general, make sure the termite management system fits the house style ...one type does not suit all!!

Remember... before you build, design to make it easy to inspect for termites.

For additional assistance, please contact;

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