

# STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

## PROTECTION OF BUILDINGS FROM SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES

### PREVENTION, DETECTION AND TREATMENT OF INFESTATION

*Extract from Section 3 Volume 2: Building Code of Australia*

#### **Explanatory information: Termites:**

##### **1. Barriers - Part of a system**

There are more than 350 species of termites in Australia, about 30 of which achieve economic importance by causing costly damage to building structures. Due to the nature of termites, it is extremely difficult to prevent them gaining access to a building. In addition to the correct installation of a termite barrier, its effectiveness will rely on regular maintenance and competent inspections. The requirements in the BCA are minimum requirements and owners of buildings may choose to incorporate additional termite management systems in their buildings.

##### **2. The Slab as a Barrier**

A concrete slab, designed and constructed in accordance with AS 2870, can form part of an acceptable termite barrier system. Cracking of the slab is common and does not necessarily indicate the failure of the termite barrier. Most cracks, including those that may appear quite wide on the surface do not necessarily extend for the full depth of the slab.

##### **3. Slab Edge Exposure**

This approach is similar to that applied to termite shields in that termite activity is forced onto the exposed edge of the slab where with regular inspections termite ingress via the perimeter of the building can be detected. The exposed edge of the slab should be kept clean. Debris such as leaves should be removed to ensure the full 75mm of the slab is always visible.

##### **4. Treatment of Sub-floor Areas**

The area beneath a building requires special attention to ensure the effectiveness of the termite barrier. The following points should be observed:

- a) **Sub-floor Ventilation:** In suspended floor areas it is important that termite activity is not encouraged by inadequate sub-floor ventilation. In conjunction with physical or chemical barriers airflow is critical. Airflow will not only restrict the growth of fungus, which attacks sub-floor members (which makes them more susceptible to termite attack), but also creates a climatic atmosphere less conducive to termite activity.
- b) **Sub-floor access:** Termite shielding installed below suspended floors relies on access for both inspection and maintenance to be effective. Accordingly, minimum clearance heights will need to be achieved between the building structure (including ducts) and the ground to allow easy access to all areas where termite shields are used. Perimeter access doors will also be needed where access is required for inspection and maintenance

##### **3.1.3.5 Attachments to buildings**

- (a) Attachments to buildings such as downpipes and service pipes must have a gap to allow clear and uninterrupted visual inspection across the inspection zone.
- (b) Structures such as steps, verandahs, porches, access ramps, carports, trellises, decks, hotwater systems, airconditioners or the like which are not provided with one of the barrier systems described in this Part, must be separated from the building by a gap of not less than 25mm, to allow clear and uninterrupted visual inspection across the inspection zone.
- (c) Where attachments or structures, as outlined in (a) and (b), abut a building and there is no clear gap, a barrier must be provided to the attachment, regardless of the size of the attachment.
- (d) For the purposes of this clause, an inspection zone is an unobstructed space which termites must cross or pass in order to gain access to a building or structure and, as a consequence, reveal their presence during visual inspection.

#### **Durable Notice**

A durable notice must be fixed to the building in a prominent location advising the building occupants that the system should be inspected and maintained.

The notice should be clearly written, on a material that will not deteriorate or fade over time and be located in or near the meter box or similar location so that it can be easily seen and read by future owners of the building. Additional information may be included as desired by the person placing the notice.