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**Helping
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fact: n. 1. an event or thing known to have
app. d. ex. 2. a tr. h. re. ma. e. fr. i.
sp. n. or observ. i. 3. a p. ce. f.
information. get me all the facts of this case.

FACT SHEET

TERMITE MANAGEMENT: WHAT HOMEOWNERS NEED TO KNOW

If you are a homeowner, you need to understand what is required in relation to termite management for new buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings. You will also need to know what alternatives are available to meet these requirements.

Your builder must inform you about the termite management system used for your home and the on-going maintenance requirements. Regular maintenance and monitoring is very important to ensure your termite management system remains effective.

As a minimum, builders must comply with the termite management requirements set out in the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

In simple terms, the BCA requires that the wall, roof and floor framing (structural elements) and door jambs, window frames and reveals, architraves and skirting of all new buildings be protected to reduce the risk of termite infestation. The BCA sets out the minimum requirements only and contractors and consumers may choose a higher level of termite management.

To understand what the minimum requirement is under the BCA, and to decide on a preferred termite management system for your home, you should consider the following important questions before proceeding with building work:

- Is the building in an area where there is a risk of termite attack?*

In Queensland virtually every area is susceptible to termite attack so the answer inevitably is 'yes', and you will need to go to the next question. Be aware however, some species of termite found north of the Tropic of Capricorn are more voracious (that means they are very eager eaters) and require a higher standard of treatment.

- Will there be any members such as wall, roof and floor framing, door jambs, window frames and reveals, architraves or skirting susceptible to attack?*

If the answer is 'no' (e.g. if termite resistant materials have been used for the above members), then, subject to any other contractual requirements, there is no obligation under the BCA to provide further termite management, but remember the rest of the building will still be unprotected and at risk of damage by termites which are quite happy to devour cabinets, wall linings and sheathing of electrical wiring. If your home does have susceptible members then termite management is mandatory.

- Does the contract require termite management, irrespective of the requirements of the BCA?*

You can ask for a level of termite management higher than that which the BCA requires. Talk to your builder or designer during the planning stage and ensure that your building contract provides for a higher level of termite management if that is what you require. It will then be mandatory for your builder to meet these requirements.

What method of termite management will I choose?

In the broadest terms, a number of options are available with varying costs, durability and maintenance requirements. They include:

- using a monolithic concrete slab as part of the management system and another approved method to protect any penetrations such as waste pipes etc. (the slab edge may be exposed in this method);
- using approved chemicals under slab and around the perimeter of the building on completion;
NOTE: The ability to replenish a chemical under a concrete slab will need to be taken into consideration where the life of the chemical significantly different to that of the building. This may require reticulation of an approved chemical under the slab with a perimeter treatment. Where a chemical perimeter is to be relied upon, a 300mm wide concrete protection strip must be installed;
- using graded stone under the slab and around the perimeter;
- full or partial installation of stainless steel mesh under the slab and around the perimeter;
- the incorporation of 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 features a number of different types of construction or is a split-level home; or
- other approved systems.

Permanent Notice on the Building - What is required?

The BCA requires two copies of a durable notice to be permanently fixed to the building in a prominent place. This is usually in the electrical meter box and one other location. The notice must indicate:

- the method/s of termite protection used on the building; and
- the date of the installation; and
- where chemicals are used, the life expectancy listed on the National Registration Authority label; and
- the installer's or manufacturer's recommendations for the scope and frequency of future inspections for termite activity.

It is important that your builder discusses termite management options and their maintenance requirements with you prior to finalising your contractual arrangements. In the case of a ready built home, you should make enquiries as to what method of termite management was used and the maintenance requirements.

In any case, if termite infestation occurs within the warranty period, BSA will investigate the advice the builder gave to the owner as one of the principal points in determining liability. (BSA has an 'Acknowledgement Form' which allows builders to record in writing that they have discussed these issues with you. This form can be downloaded from the BSA website).

REMEMBER the key to avoiding damage by subterranean termites is to:

- choose a termite management system to suit your preferences and the needs of the type of construction;
- understand the system of termite management and maintenance requirements for your individual building; and
- inspect the system regularly yourself, and each 12 months (more often in high hazard areas) have a BSA-licensed pest controller inspect and report. Undertake retreatment as recommended.

For further information

Download a copy of BSA's publication *Termite Management Systems* from the website at www.bsa.qld.gov.au, call BSA on 1300 272 272, or contact the following organisations:

- Timber Queensland 3358 1400
- Queensland Master Builders Association 3404 6444
- Housing Industry Association 3846 1298
- Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association (AEPMA) 1800 252 772
- Department of Primary Industries 13 25 23
- Building Codes Queensland 3237 0368
- Standards Australia (AS 3660.1) (02) 9237 6000