



PACIFIC HARBOUR

GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB COMMUNITY

Things you should know about Termites

Termites are a problem in Australia, and Bribie Island is no exception. Many homes are 'at risk' without the occupant being aware that termites are busily consuming their major investment – their homes.

This fact sheet is being circulated to remind residents of the potential problems associated with termites, no matter whether you rent or own your own home.

1. Termites are a major problem in Australia. If you have a home that is termite infested, then the damage they can cause can be financially crippling. It is proven that there are millions of dollars in losses every year in Australia due to termite damage.
2. An average of 20% of homes in Australia received damage due to termites. There are an estimated 1300 000 new termite attacks on an annual basis.
3. The losses reported from termites are five times more than the losses seen from a combination of flood, fire and storms.
4. Termites are known to adapt, and they tend to develop a taste for materials that are commonly used in the construction of homes.
5. Remarkably, one averaged sized termite colony can chew up a room's floor in just 3 months.
6. Termites do not stop once they have entered your home. Instead they begin to eat things like shoes, clothing, electrical wiring and furniture.
7. If you discover a colony of termites in your home, you should not try to destroy them on your own as they will only come back stronger than before. The reason is that they can burrow into the soil to live and then return because they know where their food source is in your home. You should make sure to let a professional take care of it for you.
8. Only use experienced and specialized termite inspectors, as no one else is qualified to treat termite related issues. Get two or three estimates before you decide on a company to ensure that you get the best deal.

What can I do to protect my home against a termite invasion?

Regular inspections are the most important part of controlling termites before they do any damage.

Occupants can inspect houses themselves more frequently than a professional:

- During periods of high humidity conduct an external monthly examination of the perimeter of your home along with the foundation to locate mud tubes. Termites may leave behind mud tubes that are about the size of a pencil. The tubes are made from dirt and they will travel into cracks.
- At least once a year have a professional pest controller come in to complete a thorough visual inspection. This is best done during periods of high termite activity which is early spring to late summer. A visual inspection will not stop termites entering your home but early detection can go a long way to limiting their damage to your most valuable asset.
- Keep a sticker on the inside of your kitchen/laundry door which shows you when your next inspection is due.
- It is compulsory to have a Termite Inspection on the sale of a property. Prevention is better than cure, so have regular inspections and you won't be confronted with any unwelcome surprises when you need them the least.

Remember that:

- Termites are attracted to wood, so remove potential termite food away from buildings – their food can include timber stacks, old stumps, building refuse, garden decoration such as sleepers and logs. Timber can be treated to prevent termite attack, and some timbers are naturally resistant so use treated or naturally resistant timber when it is in contact with, or close to, soil. Steps or pergolas should be on steel stirrups.
- Keep the edges of the house (slabs, foundation, piers and stumps) clear of clutter, including garden beds and vegetation. Watering systems should be at least 3 meters from the dwelling.
- Termites are attracted to water, so fix leaking water pipes, drains, showers, sinks etc., plus capture water from air conditioning units.
- All weep holes should be visible for annual pest inspection. Rainwater tanks, garden sheds and similar structures should not be flush against the house. All ground levels should be a minimum of 75mm below the weep holes.
- Inspect your home for termite damage when you renovate. When you remove wall coverings and wood, examine the pieces for damage. If you notice termite tunnels or even live termites, you will need to treat your home immediately to destroy the colony. Make sure that waste timber from construction activities is removed.
- Also keep an eye on the interior of your home for wood damage. The wood damage will look like a honeycomb due to the hollowed-out wood. The insects will eat the wood from the inside of the home, which makes it difficult to locate damages. Tap on the wall studs and the baseboards of walls to listen for a hollow sound. Examine the paint to look for bubbles or cracks, which can indicate termite droppings.
- Look for insects close to your home on adjacent land etc. The termites often will travel in swarms. They are often small and have round wings with straight bodies.