

Termites are insects that eat wood, paper and other substances containing cellulose. They are destructive when they infest a home or building. Subterranean termites cause the most problems because their movement is concealed by tunnels and wall voids.

## PRETREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

Pest control operators (PCOs) pretreat the soil of a building for subterranean termites before the foundation is poured. The pretreatment creates a uniform barrier of termiticide between termites in the soil and the wooden components of the building. Proper pretreatment of the soil prior to pouring the slab insures total coverage of the area.

A PCO must be licensed by the state of Mississippi. Licensing is administered by the Bureau of Plant Industry, a division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. The PCO must renew the license every 3 years.

State law requires the PCO to issue a contract to the builder of the structure guaranteeing termite pretreatment for a minimum of one year. Most PCOs in Mississippi use the standard one-year guarantee with options for a fee to renew each year for four additional years. The pretreatment agreement states the PCO has properly treated the structure for termites.

If pretreatment is done improperly, the builder may be liable for damage caused by termites during the first year of the contract. Builders should be aware they are not likely to receive a proper pretreatment when the PCO's charges are below the cost of the chemical.

Regulation 15A of the Mississippi Regulations Governing Pest Control Operators requires the PCO to follow the label on the termiticide.

It is a violation of state law to apply a termiticide at concentrations or volumes less than label

recommendations. A violation can result in suspension or cancellation of the PCO license, a civil penalty of \$5,000, a misdemeanor fine and/or a 6-month jail term.

It is also a violation of the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. All termiticide labels require the PCO to apply the proper pretreatment dosage and concentration as specified on the label. It is a violation of federal law to apply less than label concentrations or volumes for termite pretreatments. The maximum penalty for a label violation under FIFRA is a fine of \$25,000 and/or a 6-month jail term.

## PRETREATMENT COSTS

The cost of termite pretreatment has risen considerably in the last 20 years because of an increase in the price of chemicals and other expenses, such as labor, vehicle maintenance, equipment, office overhead, insurance and bond, employee wages, salaries and benefits, and profit margin.

Chemical costs make up approximately 75 percent of the total pretreatment cost. As a comparison, chemical costs for household treatment of cockroaches are approximately 5 percent to 10 percent of the total cost.

In 1975, minimum chemical costs alone for pretreatments ranged from 5 cents to 10 cents per square foot. Today, those costs range from 10 cents to 16 cents per square foot. Pretreatments priced at less than 10 cents per square foot are usually below-cost of the chemical, and indicate a reduced amount of chemical was applied.

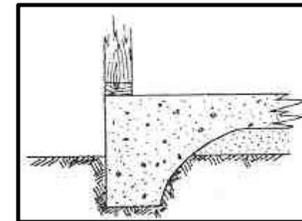
## PRETREATING THE FOUNDATION

Proper termite pretreatment requires the PCO to make a minimum of two trips to the job site. The horizontal barrier under the foundation must be treated before the slab is poured. All termiticide

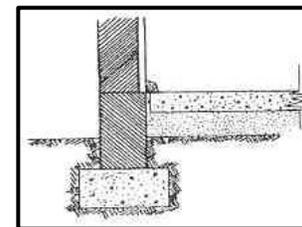
labels require the application of one gallon of dilute termiticide per 10 square feet of area. For example, if the slab area is 4,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, a minimum of 400 gallons of termiticide is required. If the fill is gravel or other coarse aggregate, additional termiticide is required. Additional termiticide is required if there are bath traps or other openings in the slab.

After the foundation is built, the vertical barrier around the perimeter of the new structure must also be treated within one year of performing the horizontal barrier treatment.

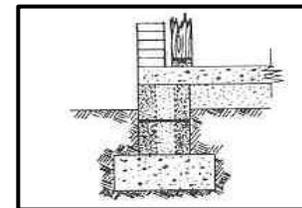
Pretreatment should include structures built adjacent to the foundation, such as porches and patios. It is the obligation of the builder to notify the PCO before any additions are poured. If additions are not treated prior to pouring, they must be drilled adjacent to the foundation and treated when the perimeter is treated.



A monolithic slab is the least susceptible to termites and the least expensive to treat.



A suspended slab is more susceptible to termites and more expensive to treat.



A floating slab is the most susceptible to termites and the most expensive to treat.

## PRETREATMENT CHECKLIST

1. Make sure the company hired to do pest control work has a valid license issued by the Bureau of Plant Industry.
2. Make sure the technician doing the pretreatment has a valid identification card for structural pest control issued by the Bureau of Plant Industry.
3. The company vehicle should be clearly marked with the company name.
4. Be familiar with the terms of the pretreatment contract.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

*for*

## Pest Control Operators *and* Builders

*about*

## Termite Pretreatments

**Bureau of Plant Industry**

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