



# New termite management standards

**This industry bulletin provides information for building industry practitioners and regulators regarding changes to termite management system standards referenced by the Building Code of Australia (BCA).**

The BCA has a two year transition period provided which allows the use of either the 2000 or 2014 edition of AS 3660.1 (the Standard) for a deemed-to-satisfy solution. This transitional period ends on 30 April 2017. From 1 May 2017, all new building work required to comply with the BCA will be required to comply with the 2014 edition of the Standard to meet the deemed-to-satisfy provisions

This bulletin provides a summary of the BCA requirements and changes to the Standard.

## **BCA requirements for termite management systems**

For the purpose of using the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of the BCA, Western Australia is considered to be an area where subterranean termites are known to present a potential risk of attack to buildings.

New buildings and structures required to comply with the BCA, which contain a primary building element considered to be susceptible to termite attack, must have a BCA compliant termite management system provided.

New buildings and structures required to comply with the BCA, which do not contain a primary building element considered to be susceptible to termite attack, are not required have a termite management system that complies with the BCA.

‘Primary building element’ is a defined term within the BCA, and for the purposes of Part 3.1.3 means a member of a building designed specifically to take part of the building loads and includes roof, ceiling, floor, stairway or ramp and wall framing members including bracing members designed for the specific purpose of acting as a brace to those members.

A primary building element consisting entirely of, or a combination of, any of the following materials, is not considered to be susceptible to termite attack:

- steel, aluminium or other metals;
- concrete;
- masonry;
- fibre-reinforced cement;
- timber – naturally termite resistant in accordance with Appendix C of the Standard; and
- timber – preservative treated in accordance with Appendix D of the Standard.

Generally, to meet the BCA deemed-to-satisfy provisions, buildings that have susceptible primary building elements are required to have a termite management system complying with the Standard.

Although items such as timber door frames, cabinetwork and timber floor coverings are not considered primary building elements under the BCA, builders may be subject to contractual or defect claims if a termite management system is not installed. Parties may choose to provide, or adopt, higher standards to protect susceptible non-primary building elements in their contracts and builders should ensure that any explicit requirements are met.

## **AS 3660.1:2014**

The Standard details the requirements for different types of physical and chemical termite management systems, which can be used independently or in combination, including:

- concrete slabs;
- slab edge exposure;
- sheet materials;
- granular materials; and
- chemical treatments.

Changes to the Standard include, but are not limited to, the following:

- improved detail and changes for sheet material barriers;
- inclusion of the use of pipe collars in concrete slab service penetrations;
- additional information about treatment of concrete slab joints;
- clarification on penetrations through concrete slabs from temporary fixings;
- stainless steel meshes have been relocated into the sheet material requirements;
- sheet material requirements have been expanded to include PVC sheeting and chemically treated sheets;
- jarrah (*E. marginata*) has been removed from the list of naturally termite-resistant timbers; and
- additional requirements for chemical reticulation systems have been provided.

## **Reticulated systems**

A common industry practice in Western Australia, for slab-on-ground systems, has been to provide an under-slab chemical spray prior to the laying of the vapour barrier, where the building or structure was to contain primary building elements that would be susceptible to termite attack.

The Standard requires that 'chemical termite management systems applied under concealed and inaccessible areas shall be replenishable via a reticulation system providing an even and continuous distribution of chemical into the soil'.

Where the BCA requires a termite management system, and a chemical termite management system is to be provided to satisfy that requirement, the chemical must be able to be reapplied regardless of whether the area requiring treatment is concealed or inaccessible.

Generally, where the soil to the perimeter of a susceptible building or structure is going to be concealed or inaccessible, such as where paving is laid, and a required chemical termite management system is proposed, a reticulation system must be provided.

## Slab as part of a termite management system

Where a slab-on-ground is designed and constructed in accordance with AS 2870 or AS 3600, the area beneath the slab does not require a termite management system other than to the perimeter, service penetrations, slab/footing joints, and control joints.

Please note that it is not an acceptable deemed-to-satisfy solution to only provide a hand chemical spray to the soil abutting untied footing/slab joints, service penetrations, and control joints. A concrete slab or footing forming part of a termite management system must:

- have all interfaces between the penetrations and slab or footing provided with a termite management system integrated with the slab; and
- have all joints, except for tied footing slab construction joints, provided with a termite management system integrated with the slab.

## Performance Solutions

As an alternative to compliance with a deemed-to-satisfy solution, a performance solution will comply with the BCA when the assessment methods used satisfactorily demonstrate compliance with the relevant Performance Requirements. Building surveying practitioners need to appropriately detail the use of performance solutions either in the certificate of design compliance directly, or in the drawings and specifications referenced, as required.

### Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.

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