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Australian Standard 2178—1978

THE TREATMENT OF SUBTERRANEAN TERMITE INFESTATION IN EXISTING BUILDINGS

STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
Incorporated by Royal Charter

THE FOLLOWING SCIENTIFIC, INDUSTRIAL, CONSUMER AND GOVERNMENTAL organizations and departments were officially represented on the committee entrusted with the preparation of this standard:

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Association of Australia

Australian Consumers Association

Australian Federation of Consumer Organizations

CSIRO, Division of Building Research

CSIRO, Division of Entomology

Council of Australian Pest and Weed Control Associations

Department of Construction

Department of Consumer Affairs, N.S.W.

Department of Forestry, Qld

Department of Health

Department of Public Health, S.A.

Forestry Commission of New South Wales

Forests Commission, Vic.

Health Commission of New South Wales

Housing Commission of New South Wales

United Pest Control Association Limited

This standard, prepared by Committee CS/36, Termite Treatment of Existing Buildings, was approved on behalf of the Council of the Standards Association of Australia on 28 August 1978, and was published on 1 November 1978.

To keep abreast of progress in industry, Australian standards are regularly reviewed. Suggestions for improvements to published standards, addressed to the head office of the Association, are welcomed.

This standard was issued in draft form for public review as DR 77124.

AUSTRALIAN STANDARD

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TREATMENT OF SUBTERRANEAN TERMITE INFESTATION IN EXISTING BUILDINGS

AS 2178—1978

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PREFACE

CHEMICALS SPECIFIED IN THIS CODE ARE POISONS. USE AS DIRECTED IN APPENDIX D AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE REGULATIONS

This standard was prepared under the direction of the Consumer Standards Advisory Committee by the Association's Committee on Termite Treatment of Existing Buildings, following a request from the Western Australian Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

The standard sets out guidelines for the treatment of subterranean termite infestation in existing buildings and includes methods for the prevention of reinfestation. It assumes that the user has sufficient knowledge to distinguish between the attack of subterranean termites and the attack of other termite species, wood-boring beetles and decay. Treatment for buildings under construction is covered in AS 2057, Code of Practice for Soil Treatment for Protection of Buildings Against Subterranean Termites.

Even when attack by subterranean termites has been recognized, successful treatment requires some measure of experience. Reputable pest control organizations have this experience and are able to offer treatments for controlling any existing infestation and preventing recurrence of attack. Such organizations should be prepared to certify their work.

Attention is directed to the precautions that should be taken when handling poisonous chemicals. People who lack proper training and experience or who do not have the necessary equipment are warned against using them.

Photographic illustrations used in this standard were provided by—

CSIRO, Division of Building Research

CSIRO, Division of Entomology

Department of Forestry, Queensland.

Acknowledgement is made of this assistance.

This standard makes reference to the following Australian standards:

AS 1694	Code of Practice for Physical Barriers Used in the Protection of Buildings Against Subterranean Termites
AS 1715	Code of Practice for Respiratory Protection
AS 1716	Respiratory Protective Devices
AS 2057	Code of Practice for Soil Treatment for Protection of Buildings Against Subterranean Termites

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FOREWORD

Some 300 species of termites are known in the Australian region, but less than a dozen achieve economic importance as pests of timber in service. With the exception of drywood termites and some species of dampwood termite, all the species of economic importance in buildings in Australia are soil-dwelling and have more or less similar habits (see Appendix A). Several of them have a wide geographical distribution.

'Subterranean termites' are responsible for most of the termite damage of economic importance to seasoned timber in Australia. Typically, they form nests or colonies underground in the soil, near ground level in a stump or other suitable piece of timber or in the trunk of a living tree. Sometimes the nest takes the form of a conical or dome-shaped mound. The colony may persist for many years and, as it matures, could contain a population running into millions. All attack by subterranean termites originates from the nest. Timber lying on or buried in the ground may be reached by underground foraging galleries, but attack may occur well above ground level either inside the wood or by way of mud-walled shelter tubes 'plastered' on the outside. Timber resting on foundations which termites cannot penetrate may be reached by means of these shelter tubes or by the erection of an independent, freestanding structure. Both the building and its contents will be protected by a barrier which prevents the termites from reaching the superstructure.

The practices recommended in the code are intended for use in any part of Australia where subterranean termites are a hazard. Tasmania is the only State in the Commonwealth where this hazard is negligible. The hazard must be regarded as high on most parts of mainland Australia, although parts of Victoria and some other limited areas are relatively free from termites.

The treatments specified in the code are known to be effective and may be used either separately or in combination to achieve the desired result.

In many cases, a poison-dust treatment will successfully control an existing infestation, but such a treatment cannot be relied upon to prevent further infestation at a later date. This may be acceptable provided that a high level of vigilance can be maintained for signs of reinfestation.

In some buildings, considerable structural modification may be a necessary prerequisite for the successful treatment of an infestation. When the best possible treatment proves too expensive, a cheaper, less complete treatment may have to be substituted.

The final choice will often depend on factors such as the type of building and the cost of any necessary structural modifications, the degree of protection that is demanded and, of course, the cost of the treatment itself.

Technical advice on the most suitable procedures to be followed may be sought from any of the following organizations:

State Departments of Forestry or Agriculture

CSIRO, Divisions of Building Research or Entomology

State pest control associations

CODE

1 SCOPE. This code describes methods for the treatment of subterranean termite infestation in existing buildings and also describes methods for the prevention of reinfestation.

NOTE: The treatments specified in this code are not applicable to buildings damaged by wood-boring beetles, decay, or termites other than subterranean species.

2 APPLICATION. This code is intended for use by professional pest control operators, who are also required to comply with relevant building and health legislation. It will serve as a guide to building owners or others who are seeking or specifying such services. This code is not intended for use by the owners or occupiers themselves because of the poisonous nature of the chemicals specified.

3 DAMAGED TIMBER. A termite infestation may not be discovered until considerable damage has been done to structural or other timbers. Replacement or repair of infested timbers alone does not confer immunity from further attack and may hinder the effective treatment of an active infestation. Repair or replacement of infested timber should not be carried out until the appropriate treatment (see Rule 5) has been completed.

NOTE: On completion of treatment, the owner, if in doubt, should seek competent advice from a builder, building authority, or architect concerning any necessary repairs to the structure.

4 INSPECTION.

4.1 General Requirements. After the discovery of a termite infestation, damaged timber should not be disturbed prior to inspection. The building and surrounding area should be thoroughly inspected as specified in this Rule before undertaking any type of treatment. For guidance, notes on the detection of termites in buildings are given in Appendix A.

NOTE: During the inspection, it is important to note any structural deficiencies that may require attention (see Rule 10).

4.2 In and Under the Building.

4.2.1 *Points of inspection.* During inspection, any mud-covered shelter tubes built over foundations should be noted and left undisturbed. The foundations, subfloor space and the ground floor area including flooring, skirting boards and door architraves should be carefully inspected. Accessible roof timbers should also be inspected for possible termite activity.

NOTE: Some timbers, e.g. wall studs, may not be accessible for inspection unless linings, etc are removed. To do so will increase the cost of inspection and repair and may not be necessary.

4.2.2 *Termite barriers.* Physical barriers (termite caps and shields) should be inspected for signs of breaching.

4.3 Outside the Building. The inspection of the exterior of the building should, whenever practicable, include all areas within the property up to about 100 m from the building. In many cases it may be impossible to inspect