

SUBTERRANEAN TERMITE TREATMENT OPTIONS

Subterranean termites can be treated only by a licensed Pest Management Professional (PMP). You may contact the [Delaware Department of Agriculture](#) to ensure that your PMP is licensed. There are five types of treatment programs and their success depends on professional workmanship. This chart explains the pros and cons of each type. Your PMP should have experience in the different control methods and should be able to assess your situation and recommend the best strategy. Before hiring a Pest Control company, obtain written estimates and then:

- (1) Ask for and read throughly a copy of the pesticide label for the product the PMP plans to use.
- (2) Ask the PMP why he or she chose the control method they are recommending. For example, if you have a well in your basement, the PMP should not recommend liquid termiticides. If you have exposed mud tubes, above ground bait stations would be a good choice. All Pest Control companies should have both liquid termiticides and bait systems in their “tool box” of pest control products.
- (3) Tell your PMP everything you know about your house. Do you have sub-slab heating ducts or rigid-board foam insulation? Work with your PMP to eliminate conditions conducive to termite infestation – moisture, wood to ground contact, or inadequate ventilation.

- (4) Discuss your safety concerns with the PMP and make sure all of your questions are answered. Because liquid termiticides are injected into the soil outside the house and borates are applied to beams in basements, they do not pose a contact risk to family members or pets. There is no danger of inhaling these products because they are not volatile. Baits are kept inside child-proof stations, so there is no risk of ingestion.
- (5) Make sure you understand what is covered in your warranty – and what is NOT covered.

While termites can cause serious damage to homes, they do so very slowly. You have time to get estimates and the answers to your questions before you make your decision. You may need carpentry work to repair termite damage after your treatment is complete. If you remodel your house and disrupt a liquid termiticide barrier, you may need to have another treatment to the disturbed area.

For more information on termites and their control, go to: <http://ag.udel.edu/extension/information/hyg/hyg-list.htm> for the following articles: [Termites And Their Control](#) [Identification Of Insect-Damaged Wood](#) [My House Has Termites! Should I Use Bait?](#) Also see: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/entomology/444-500/444-500.html> for helpful information.

	Repellent Liquid Termiticide	Non-repellent Liquid Termiticide	Bait systems	Termite Proof Material	Borates
How it is supposed to control Subterranean Termites	Termiticide is injected into soil around the foundation of the home. The slab is drilled and soil treated underneath. Trenches are dug around the foundation outside and within crawl spaces and filled with termiticide. The termiticide repels the termites and ideally turns them away from the structure.	The structure is drilled, trenched and injected as with the repellent liquid, but the termiticide is not repellent to the termites. Termites cannot detect the non-repellent termiticide in the soil so they tunnel into it and are killed.	Plastic stations containing wood monitoring stakes are placed in the ground around the structure. Stations are inspected monthly or quarterly. If termites are found inside a station, the “bait” is put in. Termites consume the bait and communicate the source of the bait to colony members. The bait is either an insect growth regulator (IGR) or a slow release toxicant. IGR’s prevent molting, thus killing the individuals. Sentricon and Exterra baits are designed to kill the termite colony.	Termite proof durable material contains a termiticide between two polymer layers. The termiticide kills upon contact. The durable material is positioned around utility conduits – plumbing and electrical pipes and wires and bath trap areas. The material is installed prior to pouring the concrete slab and intercepts termites that enter through cracks.	Liquid borates are “painted” on exposed unfinished wood. The borates diffuse into the wood. The higher the wood moisture level, the greater the diffusion. Applications are usually made in basements or crawl spaces.

Termiticide Products used by licensed PMP's	Tribute, Demon TC, Dragnet, Prelude, Prevail, Talstar and Torpedo	Premise Termidor Phantom	Sentricon (IGR) Exterra (IGR) FirstLine (slow release toxicant used in combination with liquid treatment)	Impasse Termite Blocker	Tim-bor Bora-Care
Relative costs	Usually the least expensive of the 3 treatments. Preparing for the injection of the liquid is labor intensive and the greatest source of the cost. Many gallons of termiticide are used in the treatment (~ 4 gallons /10 linear feet).	Can be more expensive than the repellent treatment because the termiticide is more costly. The application is the same as the repellent treatment so labor costs are equivalent. May only need to treat exterior perimeter.	Sentricon is the most expensive treatment. The station installation and monthly monitoring are responsible for most of the cost. Other bait products vary, but are usually priced between barrier treatments and Sentricon.	An add-on expense to liquid treatments or bait systems	Generally less expensive than other methods, but still time consuming to apply.
Treatment longevity	Under optimal conditions repellent termiticides can last ~ 5 years	Premise < 6 years Termidor 8+ years Phantom 6 years	Continuous process of monitoring with baits applied as necessary.	Manufacture does not state.	Unless exposed to constant rewetting, will last for decades

Advantages	Provides immediate protection for the structure. Relatively low cost and long lasting.	Provides immediate protection for the structure. Most effective treatment because it kills foraging termites.	Environmentally friendly, extremely low toxicity to humans and pets.	Environmentally friendly. Provides protection even before occupancy.	Toxic to many species of wood destroying insects and fungi, but low in mammalian toxicity.
Disadvantages	Termites are not killed, just turned away from the chemical. They often find tiny gaps in the treatment and tunnel through them to the structure.	Premise breaks down in water so it may dissipate more quickly in the soil than some repellent termiticides.	Structure not directly protected. With no means of attracting termites into the monitors, actual baiting may take a long time to begin. This leaves the structure at risk.	Can be put in place pre-construction only. Should be used as a complement to liquid treatments or bait systems.	Because the liquid is very thick, it is difficult to apply. It may not penetrate to the center of the wood beam, thus, portions of the structure are left untreated.

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Adapted from: Subterranean Termite Treatment Options, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/entomology/444-500/444-500.html>
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