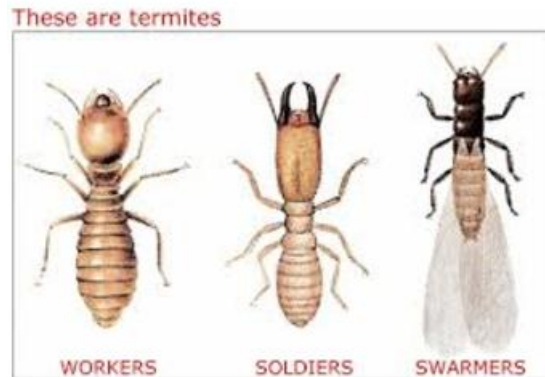


# Termites

## Frequently Asked Questions

**The following information is provided by the EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency - FAQ – Termites. More information about termites can be found by visiting the EPA's site at <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/termites-how-identify-and-control-them>**

Does termite damage worry you? If so, you are not alone. Every year termites cause billions of dollars in structural damage, and property owners spend over two billion dollars to treat them. This fact sheet focuses on how you, as a consumer, can identify and help protect your property from termites through effective prevention measures and appropriate use of termite treatments.



### How do I Know if I Have Termites?

The first step in prevention is to be on the alert for termites. Termites rarely emerge from soil, mud tubes, or food sources through which they are tunneling. Most people are not aware they have termites until they see a swarm or come across damage during construction. Some of the ways to discover if you have termites are listed below:

1. Examine, by probing, exposed wood for hollow spots (using a flathead screwdriver or similar tool).
2. Identify termite swarms (sometimes ant swarms are mistaken as termites).

### Ants vs. Termites

#### Drawing of an ant



The front wings are longer than the hind wings and the antennae is bent at ninety degree angle

#### Drawing of a termite

### Termites



The wings are roughly equal in length and the antennae are straight; may droop

The most common form of termite in most of the United States is the native subterranean termite. Other, less common, types of termites include the smaller drywood termite and the invasive Formosan termite.

### **How Can I Prevent Termite Infestation?**

Make the Structure Less Attractive to Termites. During construction, use a concrete foundation and leave a ventilation space between the soil and wood. Cover exposed wood surfaces with a sealant or metal barrier. Maintain the Termite Prevention Features. After construction, keep the soil around the foundation dry through proper grading and drainage (including maintenance of gutters and downspouts). Reduce openings that offer termites access to the structure (filling cracks in cement foundations as well as around where utilities pass through the wall with cement, grout, or caulk). Fix leaks immediately. Keep vents free from blockage, including plants. Ensure that trees and shrubs are not planted too close to the structure and do not allow them to grow against exposed wood surfaces. Do not pile or store firewood or wood debris next to the house. Inspect periodically to help ensure that termite colonies do not become established.

### **Are Pesticides Used Against Termites Safe?**

As the federal agency responsible for regulating all pesticides, including termiticides, sold, applied, or distributed in the United States, EPA must ensure that the pesticide, when used according to label directions, meets current safety standards to protect human health and the environment. To make such determinations, we require more than 100 different scientific studies and tests from applicants. Most states also review the pesticide label to ensure that it complies with federal labeling requirements and any additional state restrictions of use.

Many termiticides are highly toxic, making it critical to follow label directions with added care. Pest management professionals have the knowledge, expertise, and equipment as required by the label, which minimizes risks and maximizes effectiveness.

### **How do I Handle a Termite Infestation?**

Choose a pest control company carefully - Firms offering termite services must be licensed by your state. Ask to see the company's license and, if you have any concerns, call your state pesticide regulatory agency. Please read our Citizen's Guide to Pest Control & Safety for more tips on how to choose a company that will do a good job.

### **What if Something Goes Wrong?**

To register a complaint concerning a pesticide misapplication, contact your state pesticide regulatory agency. You may also want to call the National Pesticide Information Center's (NPIC) EXIT toll-free hotline at 1-800-858-7378. NPIC provides experts who can answer a broad range of questions concerning pesticide-related issues, such as product use and health effects.

### **What is the Government's Role in Termite Control?**

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs provides information and tools to federal, state, local agencies and the public on termite control. Our rigorous pesticide review process is designed to ensure that registered termiticides used according to label directions and precautions can effectively treat termite infestations with minimal risk.

We serve as a source of information about pesticide and non-pesticide controls to the general public, news media, and state and local agencies.

We encourage termite prevention efforts.

We have stringent standards for the registration and use of termite control products.

We require a minimum number of years of proven effectiveness and certain label statements before we register termite products (See Pesticide Registration Notice 96-7 and OCSPP Harmonized Test Guidelines 810.3600 and 810.3800 for more information.)

Products that only claim to kill termites have not demonstrated the ability to protect structures against termites. These products are only intended to kill termites that directly contact the pesticide, not the whole infestation.

### **The U.S. Department of Agriculture has several termite research and control programs.**

Provides invaluable research on different termite control treatments and technologies.

The U.S. Forest Service provides research support related to termites.

They publish news and events for the public on termites and termite control.

The National Invasive Species Information Center has information on Formosan Subterranean Termites.

USDA funds Louisiana State University termite programs on termites and Formosan Subterranean Termites.

**State and local government agencies play a critical role in termite control by:**

regulating (licensing) pest control companies and testing pest management professionals

providing consumer advice and information sheets on various structural pests

**Where Can I Get More Information?**

National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)

Tel: 1-800-858-7378

E-mail

NPIC's website [EXIT](#)

Termite Resource Guide [EXIT](#)

State Pesticide Regulatory Agencies [EXIT](#)

State Cooperative Extension Service Offices

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs