



A Message on Protecting your new Home from Termites

Dear Homeowner:

Congratulations on the purchase of your new home. As a homeowner, you want to protect your investment and you should be aware that one of the biggest threats to your home is an insect that is commonly found throughout Florida – the subterranean termite.

It is estimated that termites annually cause more damage to Florida homes than all fires and tornadoes combined. It is very likely that there is a termite colony within a short distance of your home. The following information will help you protect your home from them.

Basic Termite Facts

The termites that most commonly cause damage to new homes are subterranean termites. These insects live in the soil and feed on wood and wood products, such as paper, cardboard, or any other cellulose product. Colonies typically consist of 500,000 to 1 million individuals. It has been estimated that termites can destroy up to a pound of wood a day. Termites are constantly looking for more food, and they will forage up to several hundred feet from their main colony.

How Your Home is Protected

Most new homes in Florida are protected from subterranean termites by the application of an insecticide barrier during the construction of the home. This barrier should have been made in several applications – and a third application after the final grading and landscaping was done.

Proper construction also aids in termite protection. Avoid wood-to-soil contact (siding, steps, porches); install wide overhangs that prevent rain water from washing away soil at the base of the foundation; avoid placing soil-filled planters against the side of a house; and terminate all siding – especially stucco on wire lath and foam insulation products – at least 6 inches above grade.

Your Termite Protection Contract

After a termite protection treatment is completed, the pest control company must issue a termite protection contract. This contract will usually be given to the builder, who will then pass it on to you. Make sure you get a copy of the contract, and make sure you know the name of the pest control company that provided the treatment to your house. The company is obligated to protect your house for the first year, and you have the option of renewing this protection for up to four additional years. Most pest control companies want their customers to stay with them for a long time, and will renew the termite protection contract annually after the first five years.

The termite protection contract for new houses must include a warranty or guarantee. State law (Chapter 482, Florida Statutes) requires that the warranty at least covers retreatment of the area of termite infestation if an infestation occurs within one year of treatment. Many pest control companies offer more than this minimum, however, and include a warranty for repair of damage to the structure from termites. Make sure you understand what kind of termite protection warranty you have. Call the pest control company if you have any questions about the contract or the services offered.

What You Need to Do

In addition to getting a copy of the termite protection contract, there are a number of other things you can do as a homeowner to reduce the chances of a termite infestation. Some of these are:

- Maintain your termite contract and renew it annually.
- Maintain gutters and downspouts so that rain water is discharged 18 to 24 inches from the foundation.
- Channel air conditioning drainage away from the house.
- Keep the roof in good repair; stop leaks immediately.
- Keep mulch and landscaping away from siding.
- Keep irrigation away from siding and foundation.
- Don't pile wood against the house or in the garage.

If you have any questions about termite control or a complaint against a termite company, call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 1-800-HELP FLA, or the Department's Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control at (850) 921-4177. Information on termite control is also available at the Department's website www.floridatermitehelp.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles H. Bronson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services