

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

www.mass.gov/agr



CONSUMER INFORMATION BULLETIN TERMITE APPLICATIONS

Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”)

Ask your Pest Management Professional (“PMP”) about IPM and non-chemical steps that may be available to you as part of the services provided. Regardless of which control measures are used, ask your PMP what actions you can take to avoid or reduce the pest problem. For more information on IPM, please [visit: https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/integrated-pest-management-ipm-principles](https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/integrated-pest-management-ipm-principles).

Q: What pesticides are used to control termites and how are they applied?

Pesticides that control termites are called termiticides. In Massachusetts, there are many termiticides registered. Each may contain one of several different ingredients.

Termiticides are most often incorporated into the soil around and under buildings. Since termites travel through soil, this forms a protective barrier around the structure. This type of termite treatment is referred to as a subsurface application. Termiticides may also be foamed or injected into wood and/or void. Baiting systems may also be used for termite control. Baiting systems are stations that are placed around a structure in the ground that have termiticide bait inserted into the station.

Q: What health risks do termiticide pose?

All pesticides must be treated with caution. Pesticides are intended to be specifically poisonous to a target pest (insects, weeds, mold, fungus, etc.) but if used improperly may also be harmful to other living things, including humans and pets. If used according to the label directions, which is required by state and federal law, the product should pose the least amount of risk to the environment and public health. Baits pose even less risk as they are in locked bait stations that are placed in the ground.

Some people such as children, elderly citizens, pregnant women and those with health problems may be sensitive to low levels of chemicals and should avoid or minimize exposure to pesticides. Medical questions should be referred to your physician or one of the contacts listed at the end of this sheet.

Q: Will there be an odor after the application?

Products today are formulated to be low or no odor. If there is an odor it should dissipate within a day or so. If an odor persists, contact your PMP.

Q: What concerns are there with termite applications?

The main concern with termite applications is relative to the liquid applications. The concern is that the termiticide will accidentally be introduced into an area where it should not be. There are two particular concerns:

1. Cracks in the foundation: For applications being made around the outside of your foundation, it is important that there are no visible cracks or holes in the foundation. If your foundation has cracks or holes, they must be

filled with mortar or other suitable material in order to prevent significant leakage. If the cracks cannot be filled, then the applicators must remove soil to form a trench, treat the removed soil above ground, and replace it in the trench.

2. The location of subslab heating ducts must be located before a termiticide can be injected beneath the slab. If locations of subslab heating ducts cannot be determined the termiticide may not be injected through the slab.

An applicator may avoid these potential issues by using a different type of termiticide such as a bait, foam or dust.

Q: How can I check to make sure the application is done properly?

Make sure you have a licensed applicator performing the job. Ask to see their license and check the expiration date to make sure it is current. If the applicator is using liquid termiticide the applicator should be certified in category 43 (termite control) or under the direct supervision of someone who is certified in this category. Supervising applicators do not have to be on the job site during the applications, but they must be readily available to the person applying the termiticide. If the applicator is not certified, ask for the name and license number of this certified applicator who is supervising the job. You can also ask to see a copy of the pesticide label as that will instruct the applicator on how they are supposed to make the application.

Q: What if I have a well?

Liquid termiticides are relatively immobile in soil. However, if there is a well within close proximity to the treatment area, consult your PMP. If soil in the area to be treated is saturated due to flooding, rain, etc., the application cannot be made at that time. There are other types of termiticides that can be used also pose little to no risk to a well. It is important to note that the termiticide label will have precautions/instructions for the applicator to follow relative to the location of wells.

Q: What if I have a garden next to my house?

As a measure of safety, vegetable gardens should not be located within the treated soil. Vegetable gardens should be located at least five feet away from the treated foundation if treated with a liquid termiticide.

Q: Who do I call if I have questions/concerns about termiticide applications?

Questions about what pesticides will be applied and why, and specific information about the application should be referred to your school or the licensed pesticide applicator doing the work.

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“MDAR”) regulates the use of pesticides in Massachusetts. It is a violation of the law to use a pesticide inconsistent with the label directions. All commercial pesticide applicators must have a valid Pesticide Applicator License issued by MDAR. Consumers should check the applicators’ license to ensure that the applicator is licensed or certified. If you suspect that the applicator is unlicensed or that there was a misuse of a pesticide, please complete the complaint form [here: https://www.mass.gov/forms/pesticide-enforcement-complaint-form](https://www.mass.gov/forms/pesticide-enforcement-complaint-form)

- [Massachusetts Pesticide Enforcement Program](#): (617) 626-1782
- [EPA National Pesticide Information Center](#): (800) 858-7378
- [Massachusetts/Rhode Island Poison Center](#): (800) 222-1222
- [Department of Public Health/Bureau of Environmental Health Assessment](#): (617) 624-5757

If you have a contractual problem with a pest control company, please contact the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Affairs at (617) 727-8400 or the Better Business Bureau at (617) 426-9000 and (413) 734-3114.

Massachusetts pesticide regulations (333 CMR 13.00) require that you receive this information bulletin.