

The legalities of dealing with termites

Timber destroying termites also known as white-ants are any home owner's worst nightmare. They often go unnoticed for years without any immediate signs only to be discovered when the damage done is too severe. These termites, however, are not the only ones causing the damage. Various unregistered pest control officers and building contractors are causing major havoc with inadequate and incorrectly applied pre-treatment against these pests.

The South African Pest Control Association (SAPCA) regularly receive complaints from homeowners who move into their homes only to find that the grounds on which the house is built or the structure have not been treated properly.

Termiticides are registered through the Registrar Act 36 of 1947 only after thorough testing by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). The testing is done in accordance with the SABS code of practice 0124. Modern termiticides, which are more "environmentally friendly", only offer a protection and efficiency guarantee to a maximum of five years compared to older compounds like DDT and Chlordane, which have been banned. This however is not always the case, according to Mark Enslin, president of the South African Pest Control Association.

SAPCA have found that there are PCOs that offer to termite-proof buildings at a rate per square metre, which was well below the wholesale cost of the chemicals alone and still offering a 10-year guarantee. ■