

How a Termite Shield Works

When installed properly, a termite shield makes it difficult for termites to enter your home undetected. Basically, the termites have to [build a mud tube](#) around and over the shield to access any wood above the shield. Active [colonies](#) may create mud tubes on the shield, which can be more easily noticed by your termite expert. In this case, the shield has helped you discover the termites and is therefore beneficial.

You and your termite expert should regularly inspect for mud tubes under termite shields. These tubes may extend a long way under the shield as termites forage for food. If you are monitoring for mud tubes, you may discover termite activity before a colony has damaged your home.

The efficacy of termite shields in increasing the visibility of infestations depends on the availability of alternative food and moisture sources in your home. If other sources are more readily available, termites will not attack the termite shields. Instead, they may focus on other locations first, which may or may not be as visible as the shields.

Where Should a Termite Shield Be Installed?

When a home is [under construction](#), a metal termite shield may be installed around common subterranean termite entry points near the foundation, utility access points and wall joints. Termite shields are designed as a tool to help make termite infestations more visible, not prevent infestations from taking place.

In order to be effective, termite shields must be installed properly – typically bent down at a 45-degree angle and sealed at all joints. Since they are flush with your home’s construction, termite shields force termites to attack the shield to try to gain entry into the home.

Do Termite Shields Have Chemicals?

A termite shield is a physical barrier. There are no [chemicals](#) in a termite shield that can kill or repel termites. The shield simply makes it more difficult for termites to access your home.

Termite shields are not effective in deterring termites from attacking underground areas, such as finished basements, and do not work with slab-on-ground construction. You must employ other methods of prevention for homes with these construction types.

Other “Termite Shields”

There are no pesticides in termite shields when the term refers to [metal](#), physical barriers. However, usage of the term “termite shield” varies within the pest control industry. Some professionals may use the term to describe liquid termiticide (pesticide) barriers applied to soil or wood.

Termite Shield Detail

A properly installed termite shield can help alert you to termites trying to enter your home.

A termite shield (strip of sheet metal running along the foundation, pipes and/or piers of a home) is installed during [new home construction](#). It should extend out two inches and bend down at a 45-degree angle from the foundation, wall or pier. To function properly, it also must be tightly sealed, with any gaps in the shield being welded or bonded together. Any points where bolts penetrate the shield itself must be sealed with roofing sealant or another sealant.

What Is a Termite Shield Made of?

Termite shields must be made of [durable metals](#) that are not susceptible to corrosion. Common termite shield materials include galvanized steel, galvanized iron, [copper](#), zincanneal steel or aluminum alloy.

Steel and iron are coated with zinc in the galvanization process. Galvanized metal is better able to withstand exposure to water and air without rusting.

When copper is exposed to water and air, its outer layer turns a greenish color. This outer layer is a patina, a filmy layer caused by oxidation, and it protects the copper sheet from further corrosion.

How Do Termite Shields Fit into a Termite Protection Plan?

Regardless of the material used, a termite shield must be properly installed to effectively force termites to build mud tubes in more visible locations. If there are gaps or cracks, termites will find other locations to squeeze into your home – and these entry points may not be as noticeable as termite shields.

While a termite shield is one tool that homeowners can use to help identify a termite infestation, it merely serves to highlight signs of activity. Termite shields should not be the sole prevention or defense technique used in your termite prevention plan.

Even if your home has a termite shield, termites can build around the shield or enter your home through cracks in the foundation that are below the shield. [Regular termite inspections](#) by a trained expert are important to [detect warning signs](#) of an infestation and protect your home.