

Changes to Termite Management Provisions – Overview

The purpose of this document is to explain the rationale behind the changes for the termite risk management provisions in the National Construction Code (NCC), and how these changes may affect the industry.

Background

The NCC (formerly the BCA) has regulated termite risk management through Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions since 1990, and through the structural Performance Requirements since BCA 1996. Prior to 1990 termite management was regulated individually by each state and territory.

The termite risk management provisions are located in NCC Volume One, Part B Structure, and Volume Two, Part 3.1.3 Termite Risk Management.

Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions are available for termite risk management, however the requirements in both Volumes are heavily reliant on the application of AS 3660.1. There are also a number of termite management systems that have been accredited under the CodeMark Certification Scheme.

In 2012, concerns were raised by industry regarding the use of the term “termite barrier” in AS 3660.1 and the NCC. Concerns were also raised regarding the consistency of certification of termite systems due to an absence of performance criteria in AS 3660.3.

In response the ABCB agreed to establish a project with the objective of initiating a review of AS 3660.1, developing additional deemed-to-satisfy provisions which are not reliant on AS 3660.1 and adopting a revised AS 3660.3 as a referenced document for the testing of products which fall outside the scope of AS 3660.1.

Australian Standards

AS 3660.1 is a NCC referenced document the forms part of the NCC termite risk management provisions. This Standard was published in 1993 and most recently revised in 2000. AS 3660.1 is part of the AS 3660 series which contains three separate parts:

- AS 3660.1- Termite management - New building work;
- AS 3660.2- Termite management - In and around existing buildings and structures- Guidelines; and
- AS 3660.3- Termite management - Assessment criteria for termite management systems.

Standards Australia have completed a review of AS 3660.1 and AS 3660.3 which are due to be published late 2014 and referenced in NCC 2015. The objective of the revision is to address the following:

- provide up-to-date solutions which may be applied during construction for the management of the risk to structures arising from subterranean termite attack;
- provide a contemporary guide to the installation and integration of a wide variety of termite management options and the removal of any perceived proprietary details;
- provide contemporary solutions for concrete slab construction used as part of a termite management system; and
- provide contemporary solutions for the use of chemical based systems.

National Construction Code

Amendments to the termite risk management provisions are proposed in Part 3.1.3 of Volume Two. The amendments are intended to clarify the provisions and incorporate additional methods of compliance in the NCC which are not reliant on AS 3660.1.

The proposed amendments to Part 3.1.3 of Volume Two include the following:

- a restructure of the provisions for clarity and alignment with terminology used in industry;
- where a chemical is used it must be included on the appropriate authority's register. Currently the appropriate authority is the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. This requirement is not new and has always been required under AS 3660.1 however this requirement is now elevated into the NCC;
- an additional option within the NCC for sheet material. The previous NCC provisions referred to AS 3660.1 for termite management provisions for termite shielding. As a consequence of aligning the NCC with the amendments to AS 3660.1, the new NCC provision is titled sheet material. Two options are now available for the use of sheet material. The first is to comply with AS 3660.1 (current requirement). The second option is an additional Deemed-to-Satisfy Provision for suspended floors. The new option applies to the use of galvanised steel ant caps as a termite management system. The inclusion of this option means that in certain suspended floor applications compliance can be met solely through this provision, without reference to AS 3660.1; and
- AS 3660.3 is now a NCC primary reference document, and provides an additional option for the testing of chemical products. This additional option removes the need to comply with AS 3660.1 if a chemical product is tested to AS 3660.3 and is listed on the appropriate authority's register.

Industry Impacts

The Standards Australia termite committee have advised that the changes to the AS 3660 series will not affect current products available to the industry. However, the NCC will adopt a two year phase in period for the new Standards, whereby, the existing 2000 edition of AS 3660.1 will remain as an option for satisfying the termite risk management provisions, until the completion of the phase in period.

The phase in period allows time for materials which fall outside the scope of AS 3660.1 and chemical products to be tested in accordance with AS 3660.3.