



Termite (Isoptera) Treatment Expectations

What to expect and Why, after Horizon provides a Termite Treatment

Termite Identification:

The most typical termite found in our region is the Eastern Subterranean Termite. There are five (5) to six (6) different castes of subterranean termites with physical differences including; reproductives, workers, soldiers, and nymphs.

The population consists of the King, Queen, and Alates. Integral to a colony's growth, the Queen is the largest termite while the King is much smaller. **Alates**, also known as **swarmers** have long, dark brown to almost black and translucent bodies, and slightly milky-colored wings. Their bodies typically measure about ¼ to ½ inch in length and their wings may have a few barely visible hairs.

Unlike swarmers, **workers** and **soldiers** do not have wings. Workers are about ¼ inch or less in length and have cream colored bodies. They have small jaws that help them chew away at wood and move materials.

Soldiers can be distinguished by their large mandibles. They have rectangular shaped heads and their bodies are flat and wide. Although their body is usually a creamy white color, similar to workers, their head is darker and more brownish in color.

Signs of Termite Infestation:

Termite infestations can occur on the inside or the exterior of a structure. There are several signs of a termite infestation:

- **Mud tubes:**
One sign of termite infestation is the presence of mud tubes on the exterior or interior of the structure. Mud tubes look like long tunnels made of wood and soil, which the termites construct to protect them from drying out as they travel.
- **Soft wood:**
Another sign of a termite infestation can include soft wood in the home that sounds hollow when tapped, discoloring or blistering of the wood structure, uneven or bubbling paint, and small piles of feces that resemble sawdust near a termite nest.
- **Swarmers:**
Subterranean termites typically swarm in the spring across the U.S. Termites will swarm and colonies will become active and target the structure when temperature rises above 60 degrees (however, it is possible for one or more smaller swarms to occur during the winter if inside heated structures). Swarms typically occur during the daytime, especially during the morning of a day following warm, rainy weather. Swarmers



lose their wings so seeing discarded wings near doors or on windowsills also indicate that swarmers have entered and infested the home.

What to Expect After Treatment

If swarming termites are emerging in and around your home, **do not panic**. The swarming termites will drop and die in a short period of time. You may vacuum them up or you can save some in a bag for our company to inspect. They do not eat wood, bite, or sting, they are simply a nuisance. Fortunately, swarmers are not capable of constructing mud tubes or causing structural damage to wood.

Should you find termites swarming indoors **after** the termiticide barrier is applied, do not feel that the treatment was unsuccessful. Swarmers may be leaving the colony due to adverse conditions, such as lack of water and termite mortality, resulting from an **effective termiticide treatment**.

You may notice winged termites, called swarmers, after your home has received a thorough termiticide application. This can be a normal occurrence due to the biology of these insects. They can continue to swarm in the same location **for three to four weeks** after a chemical application has been applied. **This is normal**.

Swarmers may use an existing mud tube, which workers abandoned after proper treatment, to leave the colony. Swarmers may also move through treated soil. Since swarmers move through soil very quickly, they absorb less of the termiticide than workers, which move slowly, do. Due to this fast movement, swarmers absorb less of the termiticide and are thus able to exit treated soil to swarm. **Swarmers will die soon** after they leave the nest either naturally or by the termiticide which they contacted as they moved through the soil.

Alternatively, a structural problem may exist which permits termites to avoid contacting the termiticide treated soil. For example, subterranean termite colonies can survive above ground with no soil contact if a sufficient water source is available within the structure. Leaking roofs, bathtubs, showers, dishwashers and plumbing can be sources of water for termites, but this is very rare in NJ.

Termite control has evolved over the past 30 years as it sued to create a chemical barrier that the termites would not cross but leaving the colony functional on the property. The newer technology, whether it be a baiting program or a non-repellent product, are designed to eliminate, not suppress the colony. In order for these new systems to be effective, the active termites have to travel through the treated soil or feed on the bait matrix. Based on the size of the colony and number of termites traveling through the soil or feeding on the bait, total control may vary between several months up to 2 years (in accordance with the label).

Please call the office at 201-447-2530 if you have any additional questions or concerns along the way.

The Horizon Team