

MEMORANDUM

To: Licensed Pest Control Operators, SC Homeowners and Interested Parties

From: Michael D. Weyman, EdD – Deputy Director, Regulatory and Public Service Programs

Re: Guidance Document for Termite Control Retreatments after hurricanes or a sustained, torrential rain event resulting in significant flooding

The Department of Pesticide Regulation, DPR, is the state lead agency charged with oversight of the sale, use and distribution of pesticides. DPR also serves as the occupational licensing agency for all pesticide applicators. This unique position gives us the ability to provide non-biased expertise regarding issues affecting members of the pest control industry as well as their customers.

In an effort to be proactive, the Department created this guidance document to assist industry and the general public with questions arising due to a sustained weather event South Carolina may experience.

DPR has consulted with pest control operators, pesticide manufacturers and academics at the forefront of termite research. The information that follows is presented as a general guide to assist the pest management professional as well as the homeowner in assessing whether a structure will require a retreatment.

Homes affected by flood waters that received a conventional liquid termiticide treatment as the primary means of protection will require a retreatment in order to restore the termiticide barrier under the following sets of circumstances. First, if the soil within the treatment zone (a zone of soil approximately six inches deep by six inches wide immediately adjacent to foundation elements) demonstrates signs of erosion, displacement, shift or otherwise exhibits visible signs of being physically disturbed, retreatment is indicated. This will most certainly include any disturbance of the treatment zone during repairs, re-wiring HVAC work, etc. Retreatment is also justified if significant sediment (i.e. silt, sand or mud) has been deposited over the treatment zone.

Worthy of note, simple flooding alone is not cause for a retreatment.

Since South Carolina's last hurricane, or significant flood event, there are new chemistries available and registered to be utilized for subterranean termite treatments which include the installation of bait systems and the application of wood treatments with borates.

As to structures that have, as their primary termite protection a baiting system, DPR recommends the PMP contact the registrant to seek guidance.

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Borate treatments are made with the active ingredient Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate or DOT. DOT is an inorganic salt. Once applied to the wooden members the only way the product can be compromised is by exposing it to flood water. Therefore, in instances where a borate was the primary means of protection against subterranean termites, and wooden members, which would have been required to be treated were exposed to flood waters; one must err on the side of caution and assume an amount of DOT did leech from the wood and as a result has compromised the efficacy of the borate treatment. Lastly, if there is constant running/dripping water that continuously contacts the treated wood, that treated wood will be compromised as well.

Homeowners and pest management professionals should carefully review the conditions stipulated in the termite contract to establish what the responsibility of each party is, as it applies to the agreement. Of course, if a pest control company's termite treatment guarantee contains verbiage requiring retreatment in the event of a flood, the structure can be treated in accordance with that particular contract. Every structure in the geographical area affected by the storm will not require retreatment. It is incumbent on the pest management professional to perform a thorough inspection to determine whether a particular treatment has been compromised. It is recommended that if the pest management professional determines that the conditions warrant a retreatment to occur within 5 years of the initial termiticide application that it be documented within the application records.

Homeowners should contact their insurance companies in an attempt to add the cost of a retreat to their losses.

Any pesticide related questions should be addressed to your local Field Investigator, below is a link to find the investigator responsible for the county in which you reside.

<https://www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/pesticide-regulation/territory-map.html>

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