

Termite Pretreatment Applications

The Kansas Pesticide Law and the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act require that pesticide products be applied according to label directions.

Pesticide product labels and the Kansas Pesticide Law state that it is unlawful for any person to use pesticides in a manner that is inconsistent with the pesticide's label instructions.

The Kansas Pesticide Law has additional requirements for termite pretreatment applications. They are outlined in K.A.R. 4-13-26, and state that in addition to label requirements, each preconstruction termite application must include both horizontal and vertical chemical barriers.

What does this mean?

Plainly stated, termite pretreatment applications must include both horizontal and vertical applications at the proper rates to be in compliance with state law.

What is a horizontal chemical barrier?

It is a continuous chemical barrier of termiticide that is applied to the soil beneath slab floors and porches, footing trenches for monolithic slabs and beneath stairs.



Above: After the interior final grade is established, the applicator applies termiticide to the flat surface over which cement will be poured.

What is a vertical chemical barrier?

Vertical chemical barriers must be established in the soil around the base of foundations, plumbing fixtures, foundation walls, support piers and voids in masonry, and any other critical area where structural components extend below grade.



Far left: The applicator completes the interior vertical application before the flat concrete surface is poured.

Left: The exterior vertical application is made after final grading is complete and sometimes after the turf and ornamentals are installed.

Vertical applications may be performed two ways. The applicator may dig a trench according to label directions and apply the termiticide in the trench. Alternatively, the applicator may dig a trench according to label directions and apply termiticide by rodding in the trench to the top of the footing or to a minimum depth of four feet.

What are the types and costs of termiticides?

There are two basic types of soil treatment termiticides offered on the market: repellent and nonrepellent. Repellent termiticides are generally less expensive than nonrepellent termiticides.

When estimating the cost of termiticides for your project, you should consider the cost of the termiticide and how much will need to be applied to follow label directions and state regulations.

Termiticide prices can be divided into three groups. The lowest priced group is repellent termiticides. The middle priced group includes the higher cost repellents and lower cost nonrepellent termiticides.

The highest priced group is nonrepellent termiticides.

An easy way to figure the cost of termiticide products in a job estimate is by the cost of a finished gallon of solution to be applied.

Low-cost termiticides are about 40 cents to 60 cents per finished gallon, mid-cost are about \$1 per finished gallon and high-cost are about \$1.65 per finished gallon.

How much should be applied?

You can estimate the amount of horizontal area to be treated for a flat slab building by first determining the size of the slab. For instance, a building that is 60 feet by 100 feet has a 6,000 square feet area to be treated. Most termiticide labels require a minimum of one gallon of finished solution per 10 square feet, so the horizontal application would require 600 gallons of finished solution.

Next, estimate the amount of vertical application volume to be applied. Assume the same 60 foot by 100 foot building has four-foot foundation footings. The vertical application has to be made to the inside and outside of the foundation wall, so the estimated linear feet to be treated are 640.

Using the formula four gallons for every 10 linear feet per foot of depth would give the following amount of termiticide to apply: $4 \times (640/10) \times 4$ foot of depth = 1,024 gallons of finished solution for the vertical application.

Combining the gallons of finished solution needed for the horizontal application (600) with the gallons needed for the vertical application (1,024) results in a total 1,624 gallons of finished solution to treat the building according to the label directions and state regulations. The cost of termiticide to treat this building would then be:

- Low-cost termiticide: \$650 to \$974
- Mid-cost termiticide: \$1,624
- High-cost termiticide: \$2,680

These estimates do not include the pest control company's labor, equipment and other operating costs.

What should I look for in a pretreatment bid?

Occasionally a bid is less than the cost of the termiticide needed to properly treat the structure. A reputable company cannot perform the treatment for less than the cost of the pesticide. Seek bids from several firms and make sure all bids are received in writing. You should also:

- get a label for the termiticide to be applied and read it carefully.
- check to make sure that bids received are in compliance with the pesticide label and the Kansas Pesticide Law.
- ask for a written contract that specifies what is to be done, who will do it, the termiticide to be used, the amounts to be used, and how the application will be performed.
- require a warranty and understand what it means to the property owner.

Most termite preconstruction treatments will require several applications at different times during the construction process. To keep your project on schedule and to be sure the termiticide is properly applied:

- notify the pest control company several days ahead of when an application can be made so that it is scheduled with ample time to complete it.
- be present when the termiticide is applied and record the amount of finished termiticide solution used.
- notify the pest control company when the structure and exterior final grade are completed, so the final exterior vertical application is made. This is the first line of defense against termites.

Contact the Kansas Department of Agriculture Pesticide and Fertilizer program at (785) 564-6688 any time you have questions about termite treatment bids or applications.

This project was funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement BG99732308 to the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

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