

Certified Termite Thermography a Must for Property Owners

Bart Bruni, Level II Certified Infrared Thermographer
State Certified Termite and Pest Operator

Bruni Infrared, Inc.
326 Northlake Drive
North Palm Beach, FL 33408
Ph: 954-454-5357

www.BruniInfrared.com

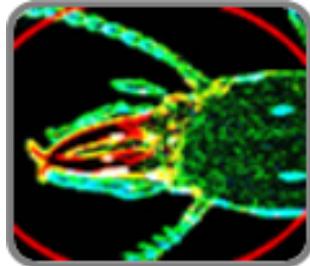
Abstract

This paper will discuss inside information regarding why certified termite thermography is an emerging market and a sure winner for Pest Thermographers. The key to a successful subterranean termite treatment is finding live infestations. For decades, termite management professionals have relied upon limited visual and often destructive inspections to locate infestations, and they still do. Building materials, methods, and architectural trends are always changing, thus making subterranean termites increasingly difficult to find. Generally termite companies do not use infrared, but why? This paper will expose shocking undisputable facts that the National Termite Industry does not want you to know.

Discussion

Formosan Termites

Termites do more property damage each year than all natural disasters combined in the U.S., particularly in Southeast Florida, Alabama, Texas, and Louisiana. This is the chomping grounds of Asian/Formosan termites. These are non-indigenous termite varieties that can consume 3 to 11 pounds of wood per colony per day. Entomologists in Florida recently discovered a hybrid species that may be even more aggressive. Termites damage approximately 600,000 homes in the U.S. each year. U.S. residents spend an estimated \$5 billion annually to control termites and repair termite damage. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. residents spend at least \$1 billion on Formosan termite control and repairs each year. Some experts estimate that number is closer to \$2 billion. Formosan termites and their hybrids can eat wood faster than any other termite on this earth. The Southern tip of the U.S. is plagued with several exotic, non-indigenous termite varieties that create above ground nests. They do so by finding or creating an



alternative moisture source in the structure and thus isolate themselves from conventional soil treatments. Termites in these well-hidden nests can eat a door frame in less than 12 hours for a snack. They can make a home or business a nightmare seemingly overnight.

These Subterranean termites often seem unstoppable because they become more aggressive after a treatment. Post treatment IR termite inspections are how to deal with these aggressive species. Termite IR noninvasive inspections properly performed are undisputedly the best way to find hidden termite infestations, bar none. Termite IR performs best in detecting subterranean / drywood termites, their activity, and related wood damage.

What is Termite Thermography?

It is the study of thermal patterns on surfaces and objects. IR anomalies reported are relative to live termites or the conditions that will support live termites or their related damage. That data are documented by a photo and a thermogram. The anomalies are



visually inspected then tested with other technologies such as noninvasive moisture meters, or fiber optic scope examinations when appropriate. Then, all the evidence should be analyzed by a Certified Wood Destroying Organism inspector, a.k.a. Termite Inspector. This is necessary to be sure that the end user receives information that can lead to treatment solutions. All this information is then interpreted and put into an IR report which provides information about the exposed or hidden location of live termites and their costly damage. Thus, a method to correct the infestation is directly from the point of entry which provides the best chance for a truly successful treatment.

Each State has its own laws, rules and regulation for home and termite inspections. Generally, state inspections adhere to only visual inspection standards and protocols. Termite IR provides pertinent information that State regulated termite inspections do not provide.

Eighty percent of all the pest control in this country is performed by property owners themselves. Termite IR Inspections find the termites so the termite company or the homeowners can provide treatment to the exact points of entry and beyond. IR Termite Thermography does this very well, better than most termite companies can or choose to do. IR Integrated Termite Management is the best and the quickest way to cease feeding and to mitigate risk of wood damage. This is because it provides accurate documentation and finds the source.

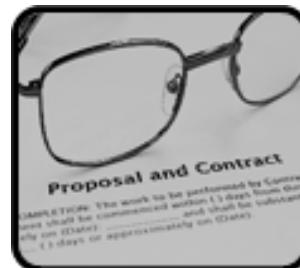
Trump Royal, Miami Beach



IR Pest and Termite for commercial buildings fills many needs such as detecting rodents, small critters, termites, and high levels of moisture within roofs, walls, and floors. This sector of the market has a greater need for this service than homeowners. Commercial buildings are mostly occupied by businesses and termite and pest infestations can damage inventory and termite swarms could hinder the tenant's ability to operate normally.

Property owners should carefully read their agreement and fully understand the retreatment warranty or one million dollar wood damage guarantees offered by national pest companies before signing. Termite agreements, including warranties and/or wood damage repair guarantees, are primarily to protect the termite company - not the client. The reality is that these guaranteed repair benefits must be approved by the company, and owners must fully comply with the agreement they signed. These are a couple examples of the conditions commonly used and what they really mean.

The customer is responsible for; 'the covered premises must not have any leaks or moisture intrusion while under this agreement'. To put this in perspective, only one drop of water from an eye dropper sustains a million termites for the day. Moisture related components such as plumbing or A/C lines can sweat, rust, and leak. This is common in the South. Therefore, States that have humid, wet weather have greater risk of their termite agreement being nullified if a claim arises. Ironically, the South is where Formosan and Asian termite live. Termite IR fits these needs.



Termite companies generally are not responsible for additional costs necessary to gain access for inspection and/or treatment, or full access for termite inspectors/technicians and necessary equipment during treatment, retreatment or inspections. What that means is there will be additional costs should there be an obstruction in the line of treatment, such as removing and reinstalling HVAC units or removing trees, tree roots, installing attic hatches, installing inspection trap doors, etc. The fact is; termite companies are known to use unreasonable requests to mitigate damage claims.

The penalty for not complying with these types of customer requirements are the homeowner must correct the termite company's request within a designated time period or all warrantee's / guarantee's become void immediately.

Quarterly Infrared Inspections

This is the most misunderstood condition in termite wood damage guarantees; “**the company covers repairs or replacement of wood damage only where live termites that are covered under this agreement are present in wood**”.

Wood damage guarantee claims hinge on what, where, and when damage was created. It is very difficult to prove how long ago termite wood damage was created without proof



of date that live termites were present in the wood. Proof is also necessary to determine whether the damage occurred while the guarantee was in force. Without proof of when the damage occurred, and the amount of the hidden wood damage and what created the damage, the property owners cannot substantiate their case for repairs beyond what their termite company finds at the time of the claim. Therefore, only damages caused within the visual scope of the live infestation of the covered insect found in wood just prior to a claim is what

is normally awarded in a termite wood damage claim. Termite IR provides the proof necessary to get homeowners compensated properly should a claim arise.

Quarterly IR termite inspections and pre and post treatment inspection reports over time establish the size of termite affected areas and where they caused wood damage. Annual certified infrared termite reports will provide science-based, non-biased evidence that can make all the difference in wood damage dispute.

Blind Termite Justice

Too often, these cases are settled by lawyers in back rooms making secret deals that even the judge does not know about.

Case in point: A nationwide termite company owned by one of the largest service companies in the world, entered into a contract with an Arkansas couple. However, the reality was they unsuspectedly entered into a secret and costly arbitration without even the judge ever knowing. That cost the couple over ten thousand dollars before they could get a decision against the company. It costs only a few hundred dollars to bring the same claims in court.



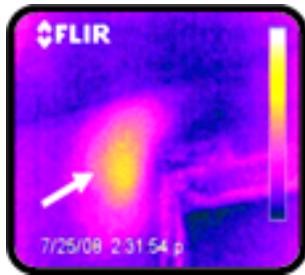
This is what makes termite IR so sellable. It is the only way the homeowner can have a viable and credible termite wood damage guarantee - have independent IR inspections performed by an independent provider to document the occurrences and damage in real time. There is a clear conflict of interest when the property owner is depending on the termite company to document termite damage that may have ensued while under their guarantee. To avoid a conflict of interest with a client’s termite company, I suggest you

team with an Independent Certified Termite Operator as your termite treatment consultant.

A homeowner's primary need with respect to termites is saving the value and structural integrity of their home or business. Next is to correct the infestation and protect themselves from re-infestation.

Formosan Termite Hidden Nest in Wall

Termite IR fills a need for property owners. Infrared can also find live infestations above ground. It finds live nesting sites called cartons. They must be found to save structures from long term costly wood damage and repetitive treatment failure. Termite IR can do this without having to expose the walls, floors, and ceilings to document prior damage. This puts the homeowner in a position so they can partner with their termite company.



The process of ridding a structure of live termite infestations, controlling them, and being properly compensated for live termite related wood damage can be a challenge. IR pest and termite inspections provide data that creates solutions to meet this challenge.

The fear of losing one's home to termites generates basic emotions such as greed and urgency. The savings on repairs and associated damage greatly outweighs the cost of the inspections. The low cost of IR termite home inspections will hedge the significant investment the homeowner has made in termite management services.

The initial termite inspection that nationwide termite companies perform is all about the companies' liability - not the customer. The question is, should the termite company be the only one documenting where live termites are located and their related hidden damage? The answer is no. The best method for property owners is a Termite IR independent inspectors report.

This true story will confirm the above statement. The home looked great from the curb, but things are not always as they appear. The lovely home in this story has more than \$60,000 of mostly hidden termite damage. A large corporate termite service provider was servicing this couple for five years.

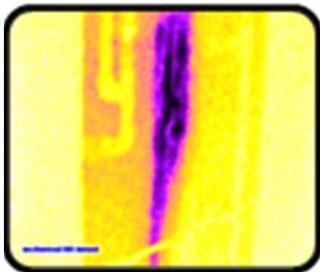
Formosan Termite Damage

A one million dollar wood damage guarantee was in force. But, after reimbursing the couple for only \$7,000 in repairs they made, the company said it would not pay to fix all the damage that was uncovered. Stunned and running out of other options the couple had to sue. This is happening all over the country to property owners each year. Termite IR quarterly scans provided credible evidence they needed when dealing with their termite service provider. Plus, the loss of value and marketability of their home by noticeable termite damage will put their home's structural integrity in question to a potential buyer.



Most termite companies have become chemical applicators and not true exterminators. They become that way because they are not prepared to find hidden infestations. They don't have to find termites after the sale? The termite company will lose money on retreatment if they find termites. The tech/inspector now has hard work to do on the building that they treated, plus their admission of failure. Their clever written contracts remove their liability by placing the onus on their clients to find live termites by doing their own inspections regularly. Most termite companies provide a very limited visible inspection once a year.

Termites Live in Wall During Post Treatment Inspection



Homeowners generally will not trust the company that leaves them with live termites over and over again. But, that creates a new problem...they still need a company to rid their home of termites. These folks need someone affordable and effective on their team. Recommendations from an Independent Certified Termite and Pest Operator and evaluations by a Certified Infrared Termite Inspector are the best way to protect their home from infestation and assure full damage benefits.

That is why Termite IR is a must for property owners.

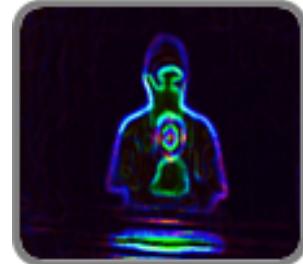
The large corporate termite service providers have not changed. They operate under the same principles they always have. Even though laws and regulations have changed in hopes of protecting property owners, the large companies have been able to legally contrive their customer agreements and lobby the laws so that they are less liable now than ever. That means more damage to homes and businesses and less payouts from large termite corporations.

Termite IR reports shared with their termite service provider comply with pest service agreements and conditions as they relate to damage and re-treatment. That is a game changer for the homeowner.

Conclusion

Should this paper inspire you to become a termite and pest Themographer, I recommend the pest thermography course offered by Infraspection Institute.

I am no longer treating for pests and termites after providing those services for three decades in South Florida. I plan to continue with the R&D projects for global chemical manufactures such as BASF, Bayer Corporation, FMC, DuPont and others. I am now providing Public Termite Inspection & Treatment Consulting nationwide. Visit me at BrunilInfrared.com.



In closing, all I can say is Termite Infrared has provided hundreds of my clients with peace of mind as well as great savings. What can it do for you?

References: Campbell Law Firm; Orkin Exterminating Company