

CONSUMER ALERT

A SERVICE OF WESTERN WOOD PRESERVERS INSTITUTE • 601 MAIN STREET, SUITE 405 • VANCOUVER, WA 98660

BUILD YOUR DECK ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

A good deck - like a good house - begins with a good foundation. While most builders understand the need to use treated decking to assure a long life free from insect and fungal attack - a surprisingly large number of decks are built with untreated lumber in the support structure.

While "out of sight, out of mind" may comfort the home deck builder, the facts are that the damp near ground conditions under the deck offer the greatest opportunity for termites and decay to attack their investment. Even when cedar or redwood is used for the decking, the use of pressure treated wood in the posts, beams and stringers supporting the deck is a must - money well spent to assure a lasting investment.

And, if you are considering using plastic lumber for the decking surface, you may want to think twice. To compensate for plastic lumber's heavy weight and tendency to sag, more treated wood joists and stringers will be necessary to support the structure. Plastic lumber just does not have the strength characteristics of real wood products.

Even decks that are built on pier blocks are not safe from insects. Termites are known to travel through the smallest cracks in pier blocks directly into the structure of the deck. Since most decks are built or attached directly to the home, it is possible that a problem with termites starting in a deck area, can lead to an infestation in the home.

Unlike decking which is usually not incised for appearance sake, the support structure should be constructed with pressure treated wood that is incised (small, tiny holes punched into the wood to aid in preservative penetration) and which carries the stamp of an American Lumber Standards Committee approved inspection agency and/or an end-tag with the manufacturer's warranty.

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