

The Beetle Certificate explained

Beetle inspections focus on the examination of accessible timber in immovable properties for wood-destroying, wood borer, insect infestation. It is important to note that Beetle inspections are aimed specifically at wood destroying organisms (**Woodborer beetle**) that can weaken the structure and not to be confused with general pest control which treats rodents, cockroaches, fleas etc...

The **Borer Beetle Certificate does not cover pest control**, nor does it cover normal wood degradation or swelling of wooden fittings through ingress of moisture, that is normal maintenance, so perform your due diligence when viewing a prospective new home, make sure that all wooden doors, gates and windows can open and close properly as these are items that will not require rectifications for the purpose of issuing a **Borer Beetle Certificate**.

There are numerous wood destroying organisms in South Africa, however in the Western Cape the majority of Deed Of Sales refer to the three notifiable wood borer beetles namely:-

ANOBIUM PUNCTATUM (commonly known as furniture beetle)

This woodborer beetle is found predominately in wooden flooring.

HYLOTRUPES BAJULES

This woodborer beetle is found predominately in roof trusses, fascia boards and wendy houses.

OXYPLERUS NODIERI

A woodborer beetle found predominately in roof trusses, fascia boards and wendy house.

What is Required in a Beetle Inspection?

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The Beetle Certificate is not a legal requirement, but it is often required by the lending institution issuing the Bond on the property as they need to know that their investment is not going to collapse due to a potentially weakened wooden structure. Many financial institutions are now requesting a Beetle Certificate before a Bond is approved.

There are also no specific legal requirements, or standards, detailing exactly what a Beetle Inspector should check for in order to be able to issue a Beetle Certificate hence the industry currently relies on the contractual clause (Beetle Clause) in each specific Deed of Sale contract as their guideline, and these can vary dramatically.

It is therefore very important that both Seller & Buyer are familiar with what is required by the "Beetle Clause" in the contract they are signing and the potential financial and practical implications thereof.

Unfortunately not all Deed of Sale contracts contain the same requirements in their Beetle Clause in terms of what must be checked for and where on the property, some may specify timbers in the main structure or dwelling only while others may specify all and any timbers on the entire property, which would then include Wendy Houses, wooden fences, gates etc.

Beetle Clause's can also differ in terms of what should be inspected for with some being rather vague and calling for the eradication of "all wood destroying organism's" which would then also include dry & wet rot along with a multitude of other issues while other contracts are very clear and specific in naming the exact Wood Borer Beetles that need to be inspected for, so it is a good idea to have your sales contract "beetle clause" available at the time of the inspection for the Beetle Inspector to confirm what is required in each case.

What are Wood Borer Beetle?

The woodborer beetles found in the Western Cape, listed above, are insects that lay their eggs in the cracks of wood and the larvae then tunnel through the wood over a period of years removing the moisture from the wood and physically weakening the structure to the point where in may no longer be able to hold the weight it is required to leading to it possibly collapsing.

This larvae stage may last months to years, depending on species and climatic conditions, before they exit the wood in order to lay their own eggs and repeat the cycle, this will continue until the wood no longer has sufficient nutrition to sustain the larvae.

What are the limits of a Beetle Certificate?

Limited Validity:

As we are dealing with living creatures with a life cycle extending to years that can come and go as they please and are impossible to detect until the larvae mature and exit the wood leaving the tell tale flight holes and frass (Wood Dust) it is difficult to say that a Beetle Free Certificate is Valid for any specific period of time, hence the reason for a limited six (6) month validity for the purpose of transfer only. If the transfer of your property is delayed to beyond the 6 month period we advise having a new Inspection performed.

General identification would be holes on the timber surface and the presence of dust (frass) absence of these holes or frass is not a guarantee that the timber is not infested as the larvae may simply not yet have matured to the point where they have exited the wood leaving a hole.

All accessible timbers present are inspected. However, the presence of beetle infestation in unexposed areas such as sub flooring under floor boards, flooring under fitted carpets and flat roofs which are not accessible, cannot therefore be inspected.

It's important to remember that a Beetle Inspection is a **VISUAL** inspection of **ACCESSIBLE** timbers for **ACTIVE** beetle infestation, not all infestation may be visible, or accessible at the time of the beetle inspection therefore we recommend an annual wood borer inspection.

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