

SAFETYCheck

Numbers relate to items on the drawings

Preventing and minimising accidents is very important to occupants and visitors to your property.

You can do this by being vigilant and identifying the obvious hazards that will periodically occur. The Diagram shows many of the typical things to look for.

Every time you see something unsafe, do something about it immediately. And if you are unsure about what to do, get advice from an expert.

What to LOOK for

Test

- ④ RCD (safety switch)

Flooring

- ② fix down loose carpet/vinyl edges or joints
- fit non slip backing to mats
- ③ no slippery surfaces especially glazed or polished marble
- apply a non slip coating to known slippery surfaces

Avoid storing knives within reach of children

Tie up cords on blinds if infants present

Fit childproof plugs to power points

Paving

- ④ avoid single steps
- remove any moss growth immediately
- ⑤ remove tree roots that are lifting paving or are trip hazards
- upgrade drainage to eliminate seepage onto paving
- remove any trip hazards, eg raised pavers, half steps

Toilet doors

- ⑥ make sure toilet doors can be opened from outside toilet

Stairs

- ⑦ install lighting so all steps are clearly visible at night
- ⑧ fit non slip nosing or grooves to edge of all steps
- ⑨ close any gaps in stairs that allow infants to fall through

Visibility

- avoid planting which obscures the footpath when leaving the property or safe entry to the front door

Security

- provide secure locks to entry doors and ground floor windows
- use remote control night time entry to garages
- ⑩ provide good night lighting to entry

Railings

- check adequacy of fixings
- ⑪ fit railings to ALL stairs including any difficult to see step, side of ramps or driveway or any drop more than 600mm
- ⑫ redesign railings and avoid placing furniture, pots etc that could allow child access over or through balcony railings or windows

Vehicle barriers

- ⑬ install wheel stops to carspaces where vehicle can damage structures or drive through railings
- install crash barriers or bollard where vehicles can drive into trouble
- fit speed humps in longer flat driveways

Hotwater

- ⑭ fit temperature limiting devices to showers, baths and basins

Glass

- ⑮ fit safety glass to entry and balcony doors or sidelights, windows in stairs or above baths, shower sceedens

Hazardous materials

- identify any asbestos products
- anticipate lead in paint films over 20 years old

Pool

- ⑯ service gate latch and self closing device
- check that neighbours' fences do not allow child entry
- fence all water features or place stainless steel mesh just below surface of water to eliminate hazard

Street drains

- request your local Council to fit childproofing to any open drains, pits or culvert

Storage of dangerous products

- ⑰ fit safety catches to sink cupboard
- ⑱ store cordless tools without drills or blades and battery detached
- ladders should be lying down
- ⑲ pool chemicals, pesticides, garden herbicides, petroleum products should be stored in childproof location

Gardens

- ⑳ identify and remove poisonous trees, eg oleanders, privet, asthma weed
- remove accessible spiky plants
- install softfall to areas around children's playground equipment
- fit tight fitting weatherseals to base of external doors and insect screens in known funnelweb spider areas
- do not store shoes and clothes outside
- remove hanging ropes from trees and buildings
- assess stability of trellises, arbors, pergola supporting plants

BBQs

- ㉑ storage cylinder should have up to date compliance
- turn off or remove cylinder after use if BBQ is auto start

Fire safety

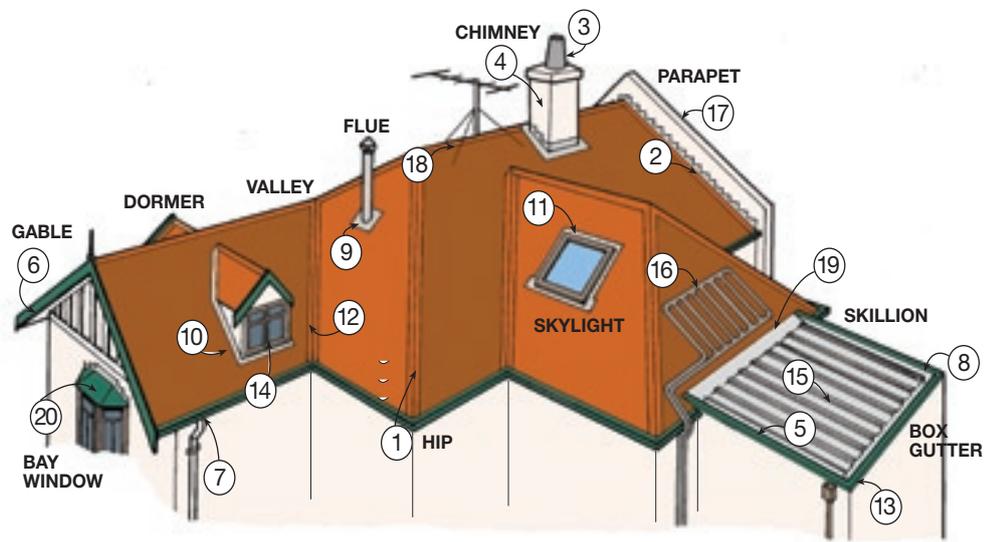
- test smoke alarms
- check closers fitted to entry doors
- check fire resistance of walls to adjoining buildings
- remove obstructions/stored goods from fire stairs escapes
- fit fireproofing to flammable walls around gas cooktops
- keep fire blanket in kitchen

Numbers relate to items on drawing.

Roofs are meant to keep out the rain, wind and animals. Most people will put up with problems in their buildings, but no one likes a leaking roof. Besides, a leak can cost you a fortune if it damages paintwork, carpet or those irreplaceable moments.

So every year and after any really wild weather (especially hail) it pays to carefully check your roof for problems.

Usually any major problems will be obvious because the roof will leak. Minor problems can take time to show especially if they only leak when the rain comes from a particular direction. Other issues will occur as materials age and need maintenance or replacement.



What to LOOK for

From inside

- obvious leaks or damp patches on the ceiling
- mould and staining to paint
- staining/blistered paintwork around chimneys, skylights
- water marks/leaks under joints between original building and any extensions
- cracks in skylights or roof glazing

It helps to look more closely at the areas directly above these signs for the cause of the leaks. In the most difficult cases, it may be necessary to inspect the underside of the roof during rain.

From the ground (use binoculars if necessary)

- slipped or missing tiles/slates
- big gaps under edges of tiles which will let water blow in – this can mean the tiles are eroding
- ① slipped capping especially at lower end of corners (called hips)
- lifting edges of metal sheets
- ② loose or lifted flashings
- ③ missing or leaning chimney pots
- ④ gaps in chimney mortar
- stains to the lining under the edge of the roof
- ⑤ severe corrosion to any sheeting or capping
- ⑥ rot to ends of timber/loose timber edges where nails have rusted
- condition of paintwork especially ends of rafters and fascias
- ⑦ drips/staining from joints in gutters or downpipes
- sagging of gutters especially at corners
- ⑧ plants growing in gutters or out of the roof especially at edges

If you are brave enough to get inside the roof

WARNING

It is easy to slip off ceiling joists or bump your head. Be careful not to drop in unexpectedly!

Looking at the underside of a roof can help you work out where it might be leaking:

- if you can easily see daylight through any part of the roof, rain will probably easily get in and birds certainly will
- the top surface of the ceiling insulation for spotting drips of water from leaks through roof
- the crushed orange dust on the surface of the ceiling especially under any cut tiles is a sign of terracotta tiles falling apart
- deterioration to underside of slates (and their nails), tiles, metal roofing/valleys that can be impossible to spot from the outside

On the roof

WARNING

Experts rarely get on a roof without a safety harness (called a fall arrest system). Slate, shingles or older terracotta roofs should not be walked on. Do not get onto a roof unless you are trained to use ladders and are used to working on roofs. Wear non slip rubber soled shoes such as Dunlop Volleys.

Look more closely for the problems you have already looked for from the ground.

- ⑨ cracks in flashings and sealants around any pipes, flues, TV, skylights/roof windows/roof vents penetrating the roof
- condition of mortar pointing to tile capping
- ⑩ cracks in long length lead flashings
- ⑪ leaves/rubbish stuck behind or down the side of skylights, chimneys or in box gutters (and eaves gutters) and valleys, annex fascia gutters, and at the flashing or joint between two different roofs, or where the slope of the roof changes
- balls/plastic bags stuck in gutters
- ⑫ any rusted surface/pipe or flue where the rust is powdery/very rough and uneven especially older valleys and box gutters or frames around skylights
- ⑬ cracks in sealants to joints in box gutters especially where joined to downpipes
- ⑭ condition of hard to get to rotted timber especially sills/frames around dormer windows or highlight windows
- crush damage/breakage to soft or brittle roofs, eg aluminium, fibreglass, metal tiles, asbestos sheeting
- severely weathered asbestos cement sheeting or gutters/downpipes
- ⑮ loose or corroded screws, fixings
- support to air conditioning and solar hot water systems mounted on the roof
- ⑯ leaks/corrosion from solar pool heaters or water heaters – salt water quickly rusts steel products
- rot/rust to frames supporting air conditioners
- ⑰ loose bricks/render to chimneys and parapets
- condition of paintwork to parapets, walls above roofs, chimneys, gables
- ⑱ loose or missing support wires to TV antennas, flues, flagpoles
- ⑲ poorly detailed flashings between 2 different roofs
- ⑳ condition of awning/bay window/porch roofs especially size of drainage

Membranes

- bubbles/blisters/splits in the surface of membranes
- missing or displaced gravel topping on top of membrane
- bird damage to membranes
- weatherproofing of any joint that looks complex

And what do you do if something is wrong

Fix it yourself if it is safe to do so and you have the appropriate skills and tools.

Seek advice from a licensed roofing plumber or tradesman experienced with this type of work.

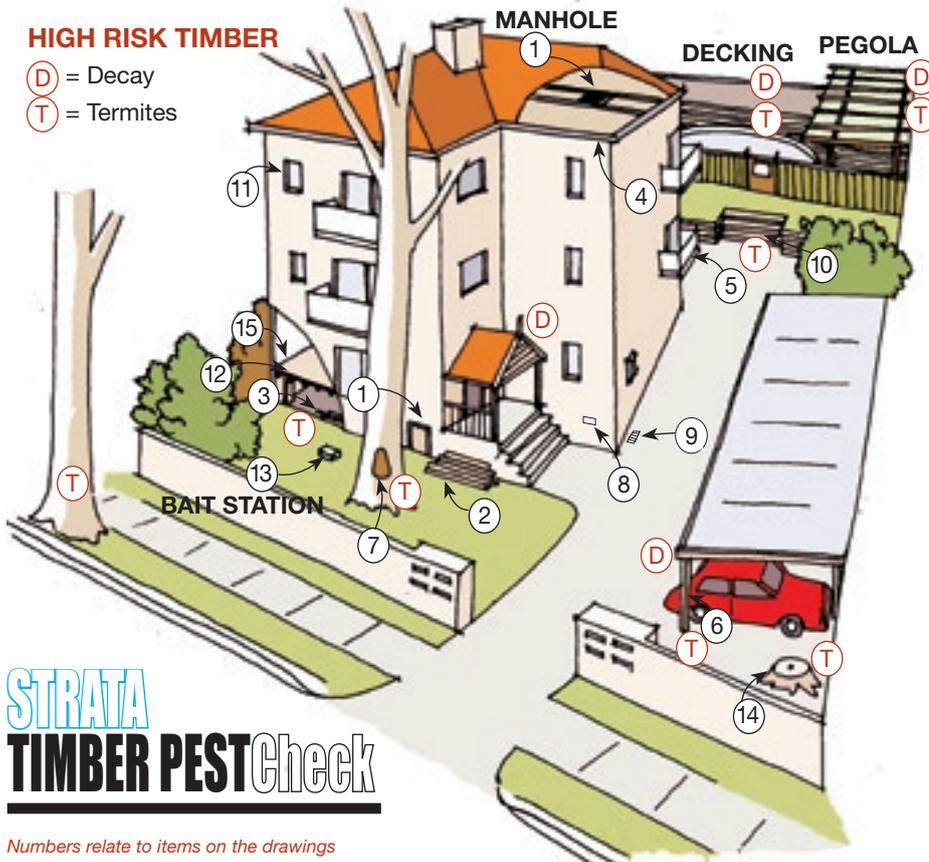
Basic tools and materials for roof maintenance

- Ladders
- Roof anchor bolts
- Safety harness
- Sealant gun
- Silicone sealant – for flashings and metals
- Polyurethane sealant – for flashings and masonry
- Rivet gun and stainless steel or aluminium rivets
- Tinsnips
- Cordless screwdriver with roofing screw socket and drills for removing rivets
- Scrapers and aluminium oxide sandpaper
- Anticorrosive primers, eg zinc or aluminium
- External acrylic paint



HIGH RISK TIMBER

- D** = Decay
T = Termites



STRATA TIMBER PEST Check

Numbers relate to items on the drawings

If you have timber in your building, it can easily be damaged by rot and insects pests. That's why we have advised periodic timber pest inspections.

You can limit any timber pest damage by keeping an eye out for all those obvious signs of insect activity or damage.

Don't worry about damage which has not happened, keep looking at the high risk parts of the building such as timber built into ground.

What to LOOK for

Access

- 1 make sure every possible part of the building is accessible for inspection, ie cut openings, trapdoors and manholes where necessary
- where no access available, consider removable panels, skirtings or reliance on careful periodic inspection. Access door to subfloor and roofs should be minimum 400mm wide by 600mm high.
- ensure clearance (including removal of soil, garden, paving where necessary):
 - from ground to underside of floor structures
 - to top of slab edges from ground or paving
 - from soil to underside of posts and stair bases
 - to visible edges of antcaps
 - to areas where attachments may bridge the physical barriers
 - of gardens and plants bridging the physical barrier or obstructing visual inspection

Reduce risk of timber pest damage

- 2 do not store firewood under or against building
- 3 do not store cellulose or timber products in the subfloor, under the house or against a basement wall
 - repair leaks in taps, shower bases, hot water pressure relief valves
- 4 repair leaking gutters, downpipes
- 5 maintain paintwork to external timbers especially sills, joints and ends
- 6 remove untreated timbers in ground contact
 - remove old formwork under suspended concrete, eg stairs, bathrooms, porches, fireplaces

Locate colonies in trees, stumps and landscape timbers

- 7 eradicate if the termite species is destructive

Ventilation

- 8 clear/clean ventilators. Remove planting obstructing air flow.
 - increase ventilation where necessary especially where ground level is close to flooring, at junction of slab on ground and timber floors, where missing at corners, or if existing ventilators are inadequate
 - fit fan assisted ventilation where natural ventilation is unsatisfactory

Drainage

- 9 inspect and verify that the existing stormwater system is working
 - grade (or fill with concrete mix) areas where ponding of water is occurring in the subfloor
 - provide drainage pipework where necessary. Installation of subsoil drainage on the uphill side of the main building may help stop water entering under the house
 - grade paving and external soils away from the building

Termites

- 10 carefully check any timber in ground contact especially landscape timbers, post/stair bases, soft masonry without antcaps, ANY untreated structures above ALL slabs on ground where slab edge is not visible for inspection.

Wood rot

- 11 carefully check joints/ends in all weather or moisture exposed timbers especially handrails, windows and doors, roof timbers, bottom of door frames, bottom of posts/stairs in ground contact, timbers built into masonry/tiles, ends of stair treads, weatherboards, under leaking showers/baths, older timbers

Borers

- 12 carefully check pine flooring, stair timbers, fireplace timbers, older lining boards, cupboard shelves, pine furniture

Bait stations

- 13 install bait stations to perimeter of main structures to provide early warning of termite activity
- 14 concentrate bait stations in gardens close to building and in line with main risk areas such as trees or known colonies

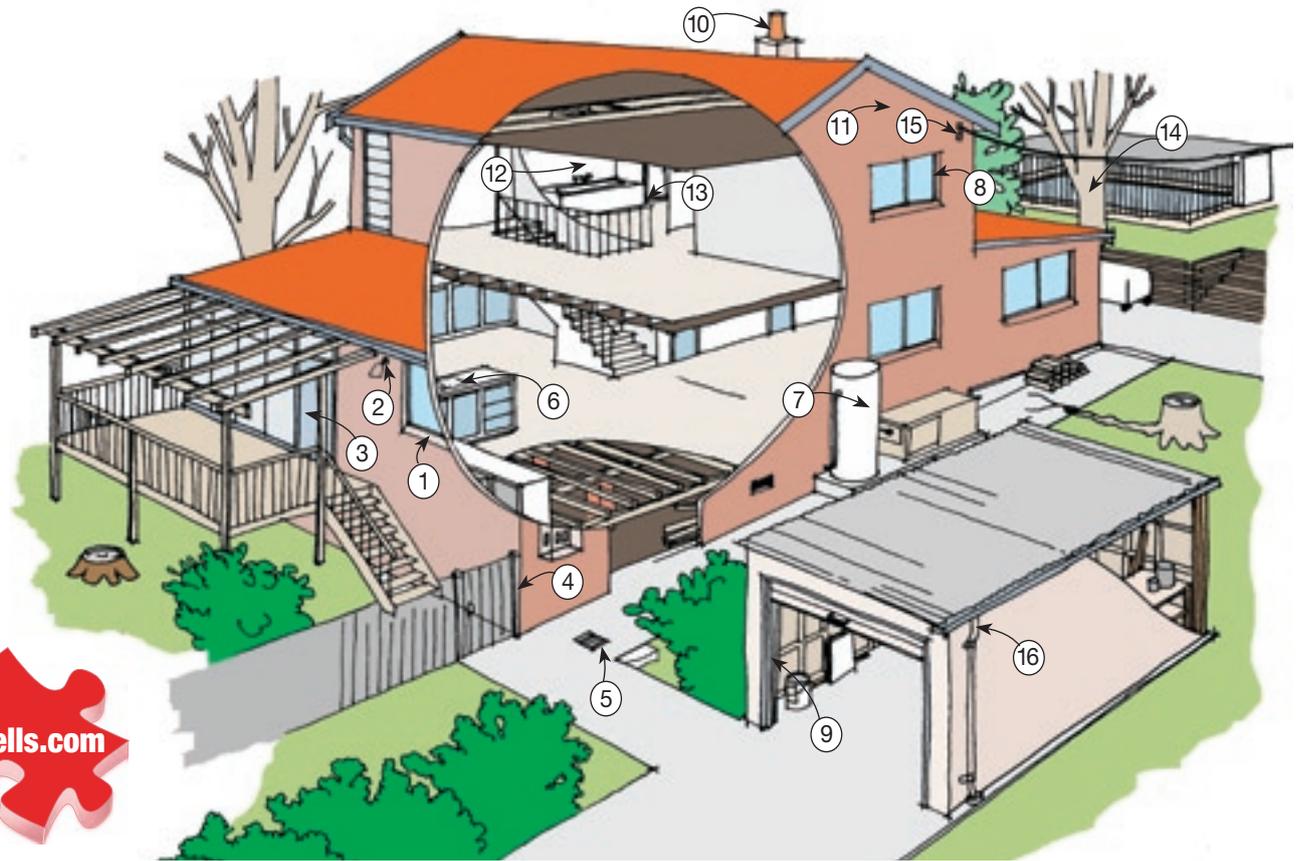
Periodic inspection

- 15 be especially vigilant about termite entry at vertical joint between masonry and timber, breakout in isolated areas inside cupboards, top of skirtings and at edge of floor under carpet
 - obtain professional advice if any activity detected
 - carry out a timber pest inspection in accordance with AS 4349.3 at no more than 12 monthly intervals
 - inspect bait stations every 3 months

Where to find help

- Pest Pack** — a consumers' guide to do-it-yourself pest inspections (Tyrrells Property Inspections)
- Keeping Pests out of Buildings** (Standards Australia)





MAINTENANCE Check

Numbers relate to items on the drawings

Every year you spend lots of money on servicing your car.

House maintenance makes even more sense than car maintenance because it saves you money during ownership and especially if you sell.

Your Prepurchase Report tells you lots of helpful things about your property including early warning about future problems.

Maintenance keeps things working properly and can stop unnecessary disasters such as flooding of basement if drains are not cleaned.

The trick is not to spend too much money but to deal effectively with all the **necessary** maintenance.

What to LOOK for

- ① clean window sills and thresholds, aluminium finishes and coatings to windows and door frames
- ② replace light bulbs especially the hard to get to exterior lights
- ③ lubricate sliding door, window, shower screen and flyscreen rollers, drawer runners
- ④ lubricate gate hinges/latches

- ease sticking/binding doors
- ⑤ clear drains and sumps
flush small drains if possible
clean open/dish drains including behind basement walls
- check pumps
- ⑥ replace faulty tap washers (reseat washer in all cases)
clean mixer/spout filters
clean washing machine inlet hose filters
repair leaks in pipework, hose fittings
- ⑦ test hot water pressure relief valve as instructed by manufacturer
 refit loose conduits and cables
- ⑧ check seals around windows, meter box, doors, benchtops and vanity basins
- ⑨ service garage door guides to manufacturer's instructions
 service locks and hardware
 clean anodised aluminium carefully with soap and water
- ⑩ sweep chimney
- ⑪ check and refit loose cladding, weatherboards, decking
- ⑫ regrout tiles where grout missing
- ⑬ remove mould from finishes
 clean exhaust fan cover and range hood recirculating filters
 arrange service of air conditioning units

- prime any previously painted bare timber
- prepare and prime any rusted steel
remove any rusty steel embedded in masonry or concrete
replace rusted screws
- seek expert advice for any concrete cancer ie rust staining from concrete
- ⑭ remove large trees from behind garden and retaining walls
clear trees/plant growth over the roofs or close to overhead electrical wires in your property
- ⑮ check condition and support for the bracket holding electrical wires (called your point of attachment)
 seal holes in walls, eaves against vermin mainly rats, mice and bird entry
 repair eroded masonry mortar
- ⑯ repair any leaking/defective downpipes or drains
- pool and pool equipment

Where to find help

- Property Maintenance Handbook* by Tony Ransley & Jerry Tyrrell