If you have never seen the inside of a wall that termites have tunneled through, picture foam that has been hollowed out by straws. The paint looks intact, maybe a little wavy, but behind it the studs crumble at a touch. I have opened walls where a single 2x4 looked fine in the morning light, then sagged like wet cardboard once the sheathing came off. That is why termite damage repair is as much detective work as carpentry. The danger hides in quiet places, and the best repairs balance structural safety, cost, and disruption to your home.

This guide walks through how professionals evaluate and repair termite damage behind walls, including framing, sill plates, floor joists, beams, and even the drywall and finishes you see every day. I will flag trade-offs, what a capable homeowner can realistically tackle, and where termite structural repair belongs in professional hands.

How termites quietly take strength out of a house

Termites do not look for the strongest pieces of wood first. They look for the dampest, the least protected, the ones easiest to reach from soil or a hidden leak. Subterranean termites follow moisture and shelter, starting with mud tubes from the soil to sill plates, rim joists, or porch posts. Drywood termites nest inside wood itself and can infest attic rafters, window headers, and trim far from the ground.

In both cases, the structural risk is that they consume the spring wood first, the softer bands in the lumber. What is left can look intact on the outside but is brittle inside. I have pulled a utility knife through a termite-damaged stud like it was a stale baguette. The true hazard shows up under load, such as under a heavy tub or a stair landing. That is why termite wood repair requires more than filling holes or gluing on a patch. You are restoring capacity to carry weight and resist shear, not just making things look clean again.

Start with treatment, then open up

Before you repair, stop the insects. Any reputable termite repair services company will insist on this sequence. Treatment options vary by species and local codes: soil termiticide trenches, bait stations, foam injections into galleries, and spot treatments inside walls. A thorough inspection usually marks infested zones on a floor plan, and that map drives the demo and rebuild.

Homeowners sometimes ask if they can jump straight to termite wall repair and replace what looks bad. You can, but you might miss active galleries just beyond your cut lines. Worse, fresh wood can become a bridge for remaining colonies. At minimum, you want a licensed pest pro to verify that the infestation is treated or contained, then you begin demolition and termite damage restoration.

Finding what is hiding behind the paint

A wall with termites is not always a wall full of termites. You need a methodical approach to avoid tearing out twice as much finish as necessary while still exposing all the damage that matters structurally.

Here is a practical, low-mess sequence I use before opening a wall:

- Probe suspect areas with an awl or screwdriver, listening for crunching and feeling for spongy resistance. Check baseboards, window and door casings, and corners where plumbing chases run.
- Tap the drywall lightly. A hollow, papery rattle often flags tunneling behind the face paper. Bubbling paint or faint ripples may track along studs or sill plates.
- Use a high-quality moisture meter vertically along baseboards and at each stud location. Readings 16 percent or higher signal potential moisture that invites termites.

- Scan with a stud finder and note layout. If studs are irregularly spaced, that alone might indicate replacements or voids.
- Cut a small inspection opening at the least conspicuous spot, such as behind a removable baseboard or inside a closet, and scope with a borescope before larger demo.

If your house sits on a crawlspace, take a flashlight underneath and check sill plates, rim joists, and the bottom edges of sheathing. Look for mud tubes climbing foundation walls to wood. In basements, inspect the top of the wall, especially where plumbing stacks and dryer vents exit. In attics, pay attention to rafters near vents and at junction boxes where warm air can condense.

Where damage concentrates and what that means for repair

Most of the termite structural repair I see clusters at a few predictable zones:



Sill plates and rim joists. These are in the splash zone where moisture lingers and where subterranean termites reach first. If a sill plate feels crumbly at anchor bolts or splits along its length, the load path from wall studs into the foundation is compromised. Termite sill plate repair often involves jacking and shoring, then replacing sections in manageable runs between anchor bolts.

Bottom plates and lower studs behind bathrooms and kitchens. Slow leaks at supply lines or shower pans keep these cavities humid. Termite wall repair here usually pairs well with plumbing fixes and proper pan flashing.

Floor joists under wet rooms or near exterior doors. Once termites reach the subfloor, they may tag the nearest joist ends. Termite floor joist repair can be a sistering job if the original joist still has sound meat for fasteners. If not, you are into partial replacement or engineered reinforcement spanning to bearing points.

Headers over windows and doors. Hidden leaks at flashing let drywood termites get established. Termite beam repair in this context ranges from inserting new laminated veneer lumber (LVL) alongside the damaged header to full header replacement with temporary wall jacks.

Attic rafters and purlins. Drywood infestations show up in attic wood as peppery frass and pinholes. Termite attic wood repair can be a mix of epoxy consolidation for nonstructural trim and true reinforcement for members in tension or compression, such as rafter ties.

Subfloors around toilets, tubs, and exterior thresholds. Termite subfloor repair matters because the subfloor spreads loads to joists. Replace soft OSB or plywood with like kind, and correct the moisture source before you close it up.

How pros decide between repair and replacement

No two jobs look the same, but a few rules guide the choice.

- If more than about one third of a stud, joist, or beam’s cross-section is compromised, plan to replace or sister with an engineered member. Patching a sliver of wood has little structural value.
- If the piece supports concentrated loads, such as a stair stringer or a post under a beam, upgrade to a full replacement. Termite beam repair and post replacement are not the places to aim for cosmetic fixes.
- If the damage runs through connections, such as notches at bearing points or through bolt holes, replacement beats consolidation. Termites love to work through checks and notches because moisture collects there.
- If you find trenches along grain that continue beyond the opening, widen your demo by at least one stud bay in both directions. You want clean terminations where the wood is unquestionably solid.

There are exceptions. In historic houses where removing original framing is unacceptable, I have built flitch plates and steel angles into the framing, hidden behind plaster. In tight crawlspaces, I have doubled up short joist sections and added intermediate blocking where a pristine span is impossible. The art lies in returning load paths to sound members, even if that means creating new ones.

Opening the wall and getting real answers

Once you have a damage map and treatment in place, open the wall cleanly. Score along studs and plates with a utility knife, then cut drywall with a drywall saw or oscillating tool. Remove sections in rectangles rather than jagged bites. Save backs of trim where possible, and label each piece of casing, base, and corner return so it goes back in the same orientation.

Vacuum galleries as you expose them. Do not blow dust around the house. I keep a HEPA vac on every termite job, and I bag waste in contractor bags right away. If you see live insects, make notes, bag a sample for your pest pro, and keep moving. Your job now is diagnosis and safe deconstruction.

With the wall open, test every suspect stud, plate, and header with a screwdriver and a chisel. Do not assume that damage stops where it looks good. Termite channels often bypass knots and pop out at the far side of a stud. Drive fasteners into suspect zones and note how they bite. If they strip easily or sink with little torque, treat the wood as nonstructural.

Techniques that hold up over time

Termite wood repair falls into a few categories, each with its place.

Full replacement. Cut out damaged studs, plates, and headers, and install new lumber. For studs, cut nails at the top plate with a reciprocating saw and pry out the old stud. Toenail or use structural screws to secure the new stud to both plates. For bottom plates, shore above with a temporary wall, then cut out the plate in sections, preserving anchor bolts when possible. Replace with pressure-treated lumber or with kiln-dried lumber isolated from the slab by a sill gasket, depending on local code.

Sistering. When a joist or stud retains a safe core, add a sister alongside it. The sister should span at least two thirds of the original member, and ideally from bearing to bearing. Use construction adhesive between the faces, then fasten with structural screws or through-bolts at a staggered pattern. Where space is tight, a steel *termite exterminators in my area* angle or an LVL strip can deliver more strength in less room.

Engineered reinforcement. For critical spans, upgrade to LVL, glulam, or steel. I have slid an LVL next to a chewed header over a patio door, then transferred load with a temporary wall and set the LVL on new jack studs. In basements, I have used steel lally columns and a new beam under a run of compromised joists to share loads with the existing frame.

Epoxy consolidation and fillers. These belong in nonstructural zones: window trim, baseboard returns, decorative beams. Two-part consolidants can harden softened wood, and paste fillers shape the surface for paint. Do not rely on them to carry load. They make termite drywall repair after termite treatment look crisp, but they do not replace missing cross-section in a beam.

Anchoring and connectors. Termites eat around nails and leave fasteners hanging in air. On repairs, upgrade to structural screws, Simpson ties, and proper hold-downs. When replacing sill plates, re-establish anchor bolts at the required spacing, or use code-approved epoxy anchors where the original pattern no longer applies.

Moisture management is part of repair, not an extra

If you do not fix the moisture, you are rebuilding a welcome mat. While the walls are open, air seal and insulate. Add a sill gasket if one is missing. Reroute or insulate cold water lines that sweat in summer. Replace leaky tub drains and wax rings on toilets. Install proper pan liners and curb flashing in showers. Verify that exterior grade slopes away from the foundation and that downspouts discharge several feet from the house.

For crawlspaces, lay down a continuous vapor barrier, tape seams, and consider closing vents and conditioning the space if your climate favors it. I have watched moisture meters drop by 6 to 10 percentage points in a week after a good vapor barrier install, and that alone starves termites of what they love.

Repairing the finishes without hiding clues

Once framing is sound, you still need the wall to look like it never happened. This is where patience counts. For termite drywall repair after termite treatment, I prefer to replace drywall back to the nearest stud bay on both sides of a seam so the tape lands on fresh paper. Use setting-type joint compound for the first coat. It resists minor residual moisture and shrinks less. Feather the second and third coats wider than you think you need, especially in hallways where grazing light reveals every ripple.

Prime repaired areas with a quality primer, not just ceiling white. If the old wall has texture, practice on a scrap to match it before you spray or roll. Touch up baseboards with a durable trim enamel. Do not rush to reinstall insulation in damp cavities. Let the framing dry to 12 to 15 percent moisture or the new drywall will trap humidity and create a fresh problem.

Safety and jacking: what not to learn the hard way

Any time you replace a sill plate, header, or multiple studs in a load bearing wall, plan to shore the load. A simple temporary wall with 2x4s at 24 inches on center and a continuous top and bottom plate handles most short spans. For beams and long openings, adjustable steel posts and a beam support the load while you work. Raise no more than a quarter turn at a time if you need to lift sagging framing. Trying to recrown a room in one shot will crack finishes in other places and can break brittle plumbing connections.

Mind electrical and plumbing. Turn off circuits before cutting into walls. Photograph every opened bay so you have a record before you close up. If you move any electrical boxes, meet Code for box fill and support. I often spec a licensed electrician or plumber for rework near structural repairs, especially where galvanized pipes or old knob and tube wiring complicate the task.

Budgeting and timelines that won’t surprise you

Termite damage repair costs vary widely because no two infestations stop at the same place. In my projects, a small wall opening with a couple of sistered studs and fresh drywall can be a weekend job and cost a few hundred to a couple thousand dollars in materials and labor. Replacing sections of sill plate with jacking, new anchors, and exterior siding repairs can run several thousand dollars. Whole-room termite framing repair with new headers, studs, and subfloor can reach into five figures, particularly if finishes are high end or if access is tight.

Keep contingencies in your budget. Once the wall is open, expect to find at least one more area to address. Set aside 10 to 20 percent for surprises. If you live in a region with permit requirements for structural termite repair near me, factor in inspection fees and schedule time.

How to choose a contractor who fixes more than the surface

When homeowners search termite damage repair near me, the results can mix pest control, handymen, and full-service contractors. The best fit depends on the scope.

A pest company focuses on elimination and monitoring. They usually do not rebuild framing, though some offer minor wood repair. A handyman might handle small termite drywall repairs and baseboard replacement. A general contractor or a wood repair contractor termite damage near me who understands structure can handle framing, jacking, and coordination with pest pros and trades.

Ask for examples of termite structural repair, not just before-and-after paint. A good termite damage contractor near me will talk about load paths, shoring, and moisture corrections. Ask how they will verify that the infestation is inactive before closing walls, and how they will document hidden conditions as they go. If the job touches a beam or multiple joists, ask whether an engineer will review the plan. It is a fair question, and the answer tells you how seriously they take structural risk.

When to grab your tools and when to pick up the phone

I am all for capable homeowners saving money, as long as safety and long-term performance do not suffer. Use this simple filter.

- If you see damage in a nonload-bearing wall and the repair is limited to a couple of studs and drywall, a careful DIYer can do it with standard tools.
- If the sill plate is involved, or if a header, beam, or several joists show damage, bring in a pro. Jacking and re-anchoring require experience.
- If moisture problems persist, such as a chronic leak or high crawlspace humidity, pair the repair with a contractor who can fix the source, not just the symptom.
- If local codes require permits for structural work, follow them. It protects you when you sell and invites another set of eyes to catch issues.
- If you need more than one trade on site, such as plumbing and electrical, a general contractor simplifies coordination and liability.

A step-by-step snapshot of a real wall repair

This is how a typical termite wall repair plays out in my shop on a two-day job behind a bathroom vanity.

- Coordinate with pest control to treat identified galleries and set monitoring. Confirm no live activity at the repair zone.
- Protect the room with plastic sheeting and floor protection. Shut off water lines to fixtures and cap as needed.
- Remove baseboard, vanity, and drywall in clean sections from stud to stud. Vacuum debris with a HEPA vac.
- Probe framing, mark compromised studs and the lower plate, and set a temporary wall if any load is present.
- Replace the bottom plate in sections, install new studs, sister any marginal members, and secure with structural screws and connectors. Air seal, insulate, reinstall drywall with setting compound, then tape, texture, prime, and paint. Reinstall trim and vanity, and caulk at wet joints.

Two days later, the wall is straighter, the moisture source fixed, and the finishes ready for normal use. The invisible win is that the load now travels through sound wood to the foundation.

Special cases: joists, beams, and subfloors

Termite floor joist repair deserves its own note. If joist ends are chewed near a ledger or rim joist, you do not have enough solid wood for fasteners. In that case, I install a new ledger on the foundation wall with epoxy anchors, set new joist hangers, and scab or replace the joist end. In crawlspaces where clearance is tight, I have run a new beam perpendicular to the joists and added piers to pick up load, leaving damaged ends as dead weight but out of the job structurally.

For termite beam repair, do not massage a cracked or chewed main beam with filler. Bring in an LVL alongside, bear it on new or existing posts with proper footings, and transfer load with jacks. I have seen a sixteenth of an inch of lift remove door binds and floor dips when added at the right place, and I have also seen over-enthusiastic lifting crack tile two rooms away. Measure as you go and take your time.

Termite subfloor repair means removing fixtures if needed, not cutting small squares around a toilet flange and hoping for the best. Replace damaged panels back to the center of joist bays, use tongue and groove where originally installed, and glue and screw the new sheets. If you have to seam in a patch, back it with solid blocking so every edge lands on wood.

Finishing touches that prevent the next call

Termites took advantage of something. Your repair should close that door.

Rework exterior grade and drainage at that wall. Replace a cracked sill pan, add head flashing over a window, and seal the cladding properly. If the wall is over a damp crawlspace, improve ventilation strategy or condition the space. If a bathroom was the source, install a quiet, effective exhaust fan vented outdoors and use it. Caulk is not a structural repair, but fresh, flexible sealant at tubs, sinks, and backsplashes buys you time.

Ask your pest provider to leave you with a monitoring plan. Whether you have bait stations or scheduled inspections, put them on your calendar. I like to leave clients with a few photos of the inside of their walls after repair. It reminds them what hides behind paint and why a little vigilance saves a lot of money.

Finding help close to home

If you are starting with a search like termite repair near me or local termite damage repair, focus on companies that show finished framing work, not just sprayed foundations. Terms like structural termite repair near me are your clue that they handle jacking, sistering, and beams. A wood repair contractor termite damage near me who

can coordinate with pest control and handle drywall, trims, and paint keeps the project tight and the accountability clear.

When you interview contractors, ask how they will document the repair. I send clients a brief packet with before and after photos, a sketch of replaced members, and the pest control treatment record. If you ever sell, that packet answers questions before they get asked.

The quiet payoff of doing it right

Repair termite damage to house framing is not glamorous. Much of the best work disappears behind new drywall and freshly cut baseboards. But there is a real satisfaction in making a wall solid again, knowing that the loads go where they should, the moisture is under control, and the insects have nothing left to eat. I have seen families move back into a room they had avoided for months, surprised that the floor no longer bounces and the door no longer sticks.

Termites are patient. Good repairs are patient too. Open only what you need to, then fix more than what you see. If you follow that rhythm, your house will feel sturdier, and you will sleep better, not worried about what might be chewing in the dark.