Termites are quiet workers. They move through hidden pathways, turn strong wood to paper, and often leave little more than a painted skin holding everything together. The good news is that a damaged house can be brought back to full strength with a clear plan and the right techniques. I have repaired homes where sill plates crumbled at a fingertip touch, where floor joists looked intact until the weight of a refrigerator told the truth, and where a single tunneled stud warped an entire doorway. Each case can be handled. The key is to stop the insects first, then restore the structure with care.

This guide walks through how to repair termite damage to a house, from the first sign to the final coat of paint. It blends field methods with practical judgment so you can recognize what you can do yourself and where it makes sense to call in termite repair services or a structural specialist.

Before you pick up a saw, stop the infestation

Repairing wood while termites remain active is like mopping with the faucet open. Coordinate with a licensed pest control company to treat the infestation before any major opening of walls or framing. Treatment might be a localized foam application into galleries, a borate treatment for raw wood, soil trenching for subterranean species, or a whole-structure fumigation where colonies are extensive. Keep the treatment report and any warranty paperwork. If you plan termite wood repair in stages, confirm with your pest professional whether new framing will need pretreatment.

A note on timing: after fumigation or heavy chemical treatment, give the house a few days to ventilate. The timing depends on the product used. Your pest company will clear it.

How to read damage like a builder

A carpenter’s first tool is curiosity. Start by mapping the damage. Probe suspicious wood with an awl or screwdriver, listen for hollow sounds when you tap, and look for mud tubes, blistered paint, sagging floors, or doors that have started to rub at the top. Termite galleries usually follow the grain and leave a thin surface shell. Rot, by contrast, feels spongy and affects end grain readily. Powderpost beetles create fine powder and tiny exit holes; termites do not leave clean round holes.

I carry a bright flashlight, a moisture meter, blue tape, and a pencil. As you find compromised areas, mark them, take photos, and sketch a simple plan view of the room or crawl space. If you discover damage in the sill area, keep going along that wall line, since termites travel. If a floor feels bouncy along a path, that often traces to a single bad joist or a rim board eaten along the edge.

When the damage involves beams, posts, bearing walls, large spans, or anything that sags noticeably, this crosses into termite structural repair. You can still do some prep and demo, but it is smart to bring in a contractor or engineer. Not all termite damage is equal. Cosmetic repairs like baseboard or drywall are straightforward, while structural termite repair needs shoring, load calculations, and sometimes permits.

Safety, permits, and planning

Demolition around damaged wood can trigger sudden movement when a weakened member finally lets go. Shore loads before you cut. In crawl spaces, wear a respirator rated for particulates, gloves, eye protection, and a disposable suit. Lead paint and asbestos can enter the picture in older homes, particularly with drywall, flooring mastic, and textured ceilings. If you suspect either, pause and test.

Cities often require permits for structural work such as **Vanguard licensed termite inspections** sill plate replacement, joist sistering that involves new supports, beam replacement, or any change to bearing walls. Some jurisdictions also require termite treatment documentation before final inspection. A quick call to your building department prevents red tags later.

Materials that stand up to termites and time

For termite wood repair, I favor dense, straight framing lumber, typically Douglas fir or southern yellow pine, kiln-dried. For high load areas, laminated veneer lumber (LVL) works well. Pressure-treated lumber is suitable for sill plates, rim boards at masonry interfaces, and crawl space members where moisture is an issue. Use hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel fasteners and connectors in contact with pressure-treated wood. For connectors, Simpson Strong-Tie style joist hangers, hurricane ties, and post bases are the usual staples.

Epoxy consolidants and fillers have a place in minor, non-structural repairs. They can harden a chewed window sash or a decorative beam end. They do not reduce deflection in a real structural member. Where loads are involved, wood-to-wood or wood-to-steel replacement is the durable choice.

Termite-resistant coatings like borate sprays help protect new framing in attics and crawl spaces. Apply them to bare wood according to label directions, typically two coats to refusal.

The step-by-step overview

Here is the high-level roadmap I use on most projects, adapted for homeowners and pros. Each step folds in several tasks.

- Confirm treatment and map all damage. Document active and historic areas, then plan repair scope. Use probing, moisture readings, and visual inspection along likely travel paths such as baseboards, sills, and rim joists.
- Shore anything carrying load. Set temporary supports under beams, joists, or bearing walls before cutting. Use screw jacks and 4x4 posts on solid footings or cribbing.
- Open up to sound wood. Remove finishes, drywall, subfloor, or sheathing until you reach clean, undamaged material. Do not stop at the first firm spot. Go far enough to land new members on full-strength wood.
- Replace or reinforce framing. Choose between full replacement, sistering, or engineered reinforcement. Install connectors, bolts, and fasteners to manufacturer specs or an engineer’s detail.
- Restore finishes and protect. Patch drywall, reinstall subfloor, trim, and flooring. Treat new wood with borate where appropriate, seal gaps, and improve drainage or ventilation to reduce future risk.

Each of these stages can be small or extensive depending on what you find. I have had projects that ended with a single sistered joist and a new section of baseboard, and others that required 30 feet of sill plate replacement and a new dropped beam.

Sill plate repair, where termites often start

Sill plates sit on the foundation and support the entire wall and floor assembly. They are frequently the first victims, especially in homes with poor drainage or vegetation against the exterior. Termite sill plate repair demands care with shoring, fasteners, and moisture control.

Start by setting temporary walls or posts a foot or two inside the exterior wall, under the ceiling or floor joists. Advance the screw jacks just enough to take load, not enough to lift the structure significantly. With load off the sill area, remove the exterior siding or interior finishes to expose the damaged plate. On a crawl space repair, this might be accessible from below.

If the damage is localized, you can perform a partial sill plate replacement in sections, usually 3 to 6 feet at a time. Cut out the bad section, clean the top of the foundation, and install new pressure-treated sill with a continuous sill sealer or capillary break. Anchor the new plate to the foundation using epoxy-set anchor bolts or expansion anchors at engineer-approved spacing, often 4 to 6 feet with additional anchors within a foot of each break. Reattach studs with approved straps or by toenailing and adding stud shoes if they were compromised.

Where many studs are chewed at the bottoms, cut back each stud to sound wood and install a new lower stud block, sometimes called a stud shoe repair, secured with structural screws and a metal tie. In older homes without a mechanical connection to the foundation, this is a chance to upgrade seismic anchorage.

Floor joist repair, the backbone underfoot

Termite floor joist repair usually involves sistering, which means fastening a new joist alongside the damaged one to carry the load. Full replacement is cleaner if you can slide new joists into hangers or pockets, but that is often blocked by plumbing or masonry.

Sistering works when at least half the original joist depth can carry fasteners and the ends bear on solid support for a sufficient length. The rule of thumb is to extend sisters at least 3 feet beyond the damaged region, but I prefer running full length to the next support when possible. Glue the sister and the original with construction adhesive, then use a staggered pattern of structural screws or through-bolts per engineering guidance. When sisters land in hangers, use the right hanger model for the combined thickness, or provide separate hangers.

If the joist ends are eaten where they sit in a pocket or hanger, you can scab on a new end with a full-depth sister and add a steel ledger angle or a new ledger board. Never hang a new joist from a compromised rim. Fix the rim

or add a beam underneath to pick up the end loads.

Check for sag before and after. If floors have settled, raise them slowly no more than 1/8 inch per day with jacks to avoid cracking finishes. In some older homes, you stop short of perfectly level to avoid collateral damage, especially if plaster is brittle.

Beam repair, where engineering earns its keep

Main beams carry multiple joists or whole sections of a floor. If termites have chewed a beam, this is structural termite repair territory. There are three common approaches.

One, replace the beam in segments, shoring the floor with a continuous line of posts, then sliding out sections and sliding new LVL or built-up beams into hangers or onto pockets. Two, reinforce the existing beam with flitch plates or steel channels bolted top to bottom through the beam at a designed pattern. Three, add a parallel dropped beam under the line of joists, supported by new posts and concrete footings, which picks up load so the original beam becomes redundant.

The choice depends on access, historic finishes you wish to preserve, and load paths to earth. Posts need proper footings sized for the load and soil bearing capacity. In crawl spaces with clay, I pour at least a 2 foot by 2 foot by 12 inch footing for light line loads, or larger per calculation. Use adjustable post bases to keep wood out of soil contact and to fine tune after seasonal movement.

Subfloor repair, the sneaky sponge

Termites can hollow the underside of plywood or plank subflooring, leaving a deceptively firm surface until someone steps between joists. To check, remove a supply grille or a corner of baseboard and test with a pick. When you find damaged subfloor, cut back to the center of joists or install blocking so all edges of the new panel land on framing. Use tongue and groove panels where the field requires it. Glue and screw the new subfloor, then sand transitions to prevent telegraphing through finishes.

If bathroom subfloors were hit, check for moisture leaks. Termites chase moisture, so a dripping trap under a tub is a beacon. Fix the moisture source before closing up.

Wall repair and what to do with drywall after treatment

Termites do not eat drywall paper with the same zeal as wood, but they will tunnel along it and through it to reach studs. After treatment, open walls only where needed to reach damaged framing or to remove paper that has delaminated. Cut drywall in clean horizontal seams to make patching easier, usually 48 inches up to hit standard sheet edges.

For termite wall repair, replace damaged studs, kings and jacks around doors and windows, and any cripple studs under sills. Where a stud is partially eaten but still straight, sister a new full-height stud tight to the old, fastened top and bottom to plates and blocked mid-height. For bottom plate and stud base repairs, treat any remaining wood with borate before closing.

When you do drywall repair after termite treatment, prime with a stain-blocking primer if there were mud tubes or discoloration, then tape, mud, and sand in two to three passes. Mesh tape saves time on butt joints. Vacuum thoroughly before paint. If the home was fumigated, consider low-odor paints for the first coat to keep indoor air comfortable.

Attic and roof framing, the forgotten frontier

Many homes get termite attic wood repair only after a roofer steps through a chewed rafter. Attics are dry, but subterranean termites can travel through plumbing chases, and drywood termites love rafters and fascia. Inspect ridge boards, rafter tails, and purlins. Sistering rafters works well if the roof deck can remain in place, but you will need to notch sisters around collar ties or metal straps. For purlins, replace or add struts down to a bearing wall, not to ceiling joists unless those joists and their connections are designed to carry the load.

Replace fascia where galleries run along drip edges, then close entry points with tight-fitting trim and sealed joints. A coat of borate on accessible framing helps, as does attic ventilation that keeps wood from cycling through damp nights and hot days.

When to DIY and when to bring in a pro

Plenty of homeowners handle light termite damage restoration themselves, such as replacing baseboards, sistering a single joist with good access, or patching subfloor around a small area. Once you are dealing with beams, sills over long runs, skewed doorways that indicate load shift, or reinforced concrete anchor details, it is time to search for termite repair near me and talk to a licensed contractor. If you need stamped calculations or a custom beam detail, look for structural termite repair near me or consult a local engineer.

Costs vary by region and access. As a ballpark, simple cosmetic termite wood repair might run a few hundred dollars. Replacing a few feet of sill plate could be in the low thousands. Sistering several joists in a tight crawl space often lands in the mid thousands. A new engineered beam with posts and footings can reach five figures. Local termite damage repair contractors can price more accurately once they see inside the walls.

Clear danger signs that call for immediate professional help

- Noticeable sag in floors, rooflines, or an out-of-square door that jams at the top
- Cracked or dropping plaster over a bearing wall, or gaps opening at crown and ceiling
- Hollow or crushed sill plate along a long wall, especially with loose anchor bolts
- Termite damage in combination with rot, mold, or persistent high moisture

If you see any of the above, stabilize first. Set shoring, then call a termite damage contractor near me for an assessment. Waiting can compound the fix.

Matching the repair to the wood species and connectors

Not all wood behaves the same. Old-growth framing is often denser and narrower than modern nominal sizes. When sistering to historic lumber, plane or shim for perfect bearing along the full length. Use structural screws with high shear ratings, not drywall screws. In coastal environments, choose stainless steel connectors where salt air corrodes galvanized hardware. If you are repairing a treated sill plate, use fasteners rated for the preservative in your region. Your local building supply or a wood repair contractor for termite damage near me can advise the correct hardware.

Moisture, grading, and why prevention is half the battle

Termites chase moisture sources, then find food. Reduce both. Correct grading so soil slopes away from the foundation. Keep sprinklers from wetting walls and do not stack firewood against the house. Install gutters and

downspouts that discharge several feet from the foundation. In crawl spaces, add a ground vapor barrier and maintain vents or use a sealed system with a dehumidifier, depending on climate. Air seal pipe and wire penetrations. Indoors, fix leaks quickly and use bath fans that exhaust outdoors, not into the attic.

On new framing and exposed repairs, a borate spray is inexpensive insurance. In some regions, you can also install stainless steel mesh termite shields at the top of foundations, which force termites to build visible tubes to bypass the barrier.

Dry rot, carpenter ants, and mixed damage

It is common to find a mix of damage. Dry rot weakens wood through fungus in persistently wet spots like shower curbs and window sills. Carpenter ants excavate wood but do not eat it. Their galleries look clean and sculpted, while termite areas have mud, frass, or ragged fibers. In mixed cases, remove all compromised wood and fix the water source before any rebuild. If you only treat termites, ants may move into softened wood later, or rot will continue behind your patch.

Finding and vetting a local pro

Search terms like termite damage repair near me, local termite damage repair, or wood repair contractor termite damage near me will pull up specialists. Ask for three things: a written scope that distinguishes structural from cosmetic repairs, proof of license and insurance, and references for similar projects. A good contractor will talk about shoring methods, connector schedules, and how they will tie new members into the structural system, not just replace wood in kind. If they propose epoxy where a beam is sagging, keep looking.

If you live in a termite heavy area, many pest control firms coordinate with carpentry teams. This can streamline scheduling and warranties. Independent contractors often provide more custom solutions where historic finishes or unusual framing are involved.

Documentation, inspections, and warranties

Keep a folder, even if it is a digital one. Include the pest control treatment report, any building permits and inspection sign-offs, photos before and after, and material receipts. If you sell the house, this file reassures buyers. Some pest companies require evidence of repairs to keep a warranty active. Municipal inspectors may want to see borate treatment on new framing or anchorage details at sill plates. Having that ready saves repeat trips.

Finishing well

Once the structure is sound, the cosmetic work should not broadcast what happened behind the wall. Prime raw wood and patches, match textures carefully, and sand feathered edges between old and new drywall. If you replaced subfloor under wood flooring, lace in new boards rather than a straight seam if you can. For tile, plan layout to avoid a skinny tile landing on a transition.

When reinstalling baseboards and trim, caulk but do not seal in moisture. Leave expansion gaps where flooring manufacturers recommend them. A neat finish hides scars and lets the home feel whole again.

A walkthrough of common scenarios

A 1950s crawl space home with a soft living room corner: The owner noticed that a chair rocked slightly. Underneath, two joists and the rim board were tunneled. The sill plate at that corner had evidence of old mud tubes. After treatment, we set temporary posts, replaced 6 feet of sill plate with treated lumber and new anchor bolts, sistered three joists full length, and replaced 32 square feet of subfloor. We applied borate to all exposed framing and laid a new 10 mil vapor barrier. Total time, two days with a three person crew. This is classic termite floor joist repair paired with sill work.

A stucco home with a stuck front door: Termites had tunneled up a foam trim detail and into the king stud assembly. The door racked. We opened the interior, found two compromised studs and a chewed bottom plate. We shored, replaced the plate in two sections, installed new kings and jacks, reinstalled the header with structural screws, and added a sill pan under the threshold. Drywall repair after termite treatment finished the space in two coats and a light orange peel texture. The door now swings freely.

An attic with spongy fascia and brittle rafters: Drywood termites had eaten along the drip line. We replaced 24 feet of fascia, sistered four rafter tails for the last 4 feet, and added metal drip edge. We treated all exposed rafters with borate and sealed every joint. The roofer followed with new gutters that keep water off the wood.

Final checks before you close the walls

Before you button up any section, run through a quick mental checklist. Are all loads transferred to solid bearing, not just fastened to damaged members? Are connectors fully nailed or screwed to the schedule, not half filled? Did you protect new sill plates from moisture with a sill sealer? Is any treated lumber separated from metal with the right fasteners? Did you resolve the moisture or soil contact that attracted termites? And did you capture photos for your records?

Repairing termite damage is part detective work, part carpentry, and part prevention. Tackle it methodically, call in help when the structure is at stake, and your home will feel solid again. With the infestation resolved and the framing restored, the next time you set a book on a shelf or roll a refrigerator across the kitchen, it will be the last test you need.