The first time I opened a wall that had been quietly eaten from the inside, the studs looked like honeycombs made of dust. The drywall still looked fine from the living room, but when I pushed a pry bar through, the gypsum crumbled and the framing behind it collapsed with a soft sigh. That job, a 1960s ranch on a crawlspace, taught me two things. Termites are patient, and good repairs demand a steady sequence: stop the insects, shore the structure, replace what is weak, then seal the envelope so it does not happen again.

This guide walks through how pros approach termite wall repair and the related carpentry that often comes with it, including studs, sheathing, and drywall. I will also cover the common spillover items, like floor joist repair, sill plate repair, beam repair, subfloor repair, attic wood repair, and what to expect from termite damage restoration. If you are looking for termite repair services or a termite damage contractor near me, you will know what questions to ask and what good work looks like.

Why termites wreck walls from the inside out

Termites love the dark, steady **termite exterminator** climate inside wall cavities. Subterranean termites travel through soil and mud tubes to reach moist wood. Drywood termites live wholly inside the wood, packing their galleries with pellet-like frass. The result looks similar to an untrained eye, but the path of destruction can differ. Subterraneans often start at the sill plate, rim joist, and bottom of studs, then climb. Drywoods can infest mid wall or in roof framing, especially in warmer climates.

Walls suffer in three layers:

- The studs and plates, which carry loads.
- The sheathing, which stiffens the wall and holds the building together laterally.
- The drywall, which can hide damage and later needs cosmetic repair after treatment.

Each layer has its own repair rules. Studs are structural, so decisions there affect safety. Sheathing is about strength and weatherproofing. Drywall is about finish and airflow, and it is the last step after you are certain the insects are gone.

Get the sequence right or you will chase your tail

Termite damage repair is not just about swapping a bad board for a good one. There is an order that keeps you safe and prevents repeat problems.

- Confirm active vs past activity. A licensed pest professional should inspect and, if needed, treat before any major carpentry. Painting over a wall with active termites is like painting rust.
- Obtain permits when structural work is involved. Inspectors want proof that treatment occurred and that structural framing meets code.
- Shore before you remove. Even one compromised stud under a point load can set off cracking or sagging elsewhere. Temporary shoring takes hours, undoing a ceiling ripple can take weeks.
- Repair from the bottom up. Subterranean damage usually starts at the sill plate and travels upward, so check the base of everything.
- Close the envelope properly. Weather resistive barriers, flashings, and air seals matter as much as the wood you replace.

A quick diagnostic checklist you can do before calling a pro

- Probe suspect wood with an awl. Solid framing resists; termite galleries cave in with a papery crunch.
- Look for mud tubes rising from slabs or crawlspaces, often the width of a pencil.
- Note spongy baseboards, blistered paint near floors, or ripples in drywall, especially along exterior walls.
- Sweep for piles of wings near windowsills, light fixtures, or subfloor penetrations after a swarm season.
- Check sill plates and rim joists with a bright flashlight from the crawlspace or basement, paying extra attention at plumbing penetrations.

If these checks turn anything up, schedule treatment. Do not tear out large sections first. Disturbing an active colony can scatter it into new areas.

Stopping the insects comes first

A termite repair plan starts with eradication. For subterranean termites, treatments range from soil termiticides to bait stations. For drywood termites, whole-structure fumigation is common, though localized injections may work for small areas. Expect to see small drill holes in drywall or baseboards after localized treatments. This is normal and easy to patch as part of termite drywall repair after termite treatment.

Keep your treatment records. In many cities, permits for termite structural repair require proof that the house was treated or that the damage is old and inactive. Good pest pros return for follow-up visits in 30 to 60 days and provide a graph of activity. Save that paperwork.

Safety, dust, and old-house booby traps

Before opening walls, kill power to the affected circuit and use a non-contact voltage tester. Expect to run across surprises: aluminum branch wiring in 1960s homes, knob and tube in prewar houses, or brittle cloth-sheathed cable. Plumbing sometimes hugs studs tight, and nails will find it if you are not cautious. If your home predates the late 1970s, test suspect painted surfaces for lead and suspect joint compound or flooring mastic for asbestos. When in doubt, bring in an environmental pro. The cost of a lab test is small compared to a hazardous dust event.

For dust control, tape plastic sheeting from ceiling to floor and use a zipper entry. A negative air setup with a small HEPA extractor vented outside keeps the rest of the house livable during demolition.

Temporary shoring, the unglamorous hero

When termites chew through a load path, the structure may be hanging on by habit. Studs with more than 30 percent section loss or any obvious crushing need help before you remove them. I keep a set of adjustable steel posts and a few 4x4s on the truck for this. Set a continuous 4x4 or LVL strongback against the ceiling joists above the damaged wall, post it down to solid subfloor or a beam, and lightly take load before demolition. On crawlspaces, check that the subfloor can carry the post. Sometimes a sacrificial 2x10 pad spreads the load safely across joists.

If a beam or floor system is involved, consider calling a structural engineer. For a few hundred dollars, you will get a clear design that saves guesswork later.



Repairing studs and plates inside damaged walls

Once you are shored and the bugs are gone, open the wall. Cut drywall back to the center of the adjacent studs to make patching cleaner. Vacuum frass and loose debris so you can see sound wood.

For non load-bearing walls with isolated damage, sistering is often enough. Set a new stud tight to the old one with construction adhesive and 3 inch structural screws staggered every 8 to 10 inches. Cap both ends under the plates. If the bottom 6 inches of a stud is gone but the top is sound, install a full-height sister and a tight filler block at the base to transfer load to the sill plate.

For load-bearing walls, go heavier. Replace full studs when they have significant section loss or when plumbing or electrical notches leave less than code minimums. Use the same or better species and grade as existing. In older homes with true 2 inch studs, plane or shim to fit, or replace in groups so the wall stays in plane.

Plates are the backbone at floor level. Termite sill plate repair usually means lifting the wall slightly off the plate, then swapping sections in manageable lengths, often 4 to 6 feet at a time. Strip the fasteners that tie the bottom plate to the studs. Slip in a new pressure treated sill plate with a continuous sill sealer to block capillary wicking from concrete. Reattach with approved anchors or epoxy-set bolts that meet current spacing. Where the rim joist is damaged, replace it before reattaching the wall so the load ***Vanguard pest inspection Watsonville*** path is continuous.

It is tempting to smear epoxy consolidant into chewed areas. Epoxies have their place for small, non structural repairs or for consolidating trim. For framing, if more than a quarter of a member is gone or there is crushing at a bearing point, wood replacement or properly designed steel reinforcement is the responsible route.

Sheathing replacement and keeping weather out

On exterior walls, sheathing gives the wall racking strength and helps set the plane for siding or stucco. When termites have tunneled through it, the wall can feel loose by hand. Remove cladding carefully. For lap siding, a 5 foot by 5 foot removal often exposes enough to replace bad sheathing and inspect adjacent studs. Stucco is trickier; you will cut and break out a panel, then later need a proper lath and finish match, which is an art of its own.

Replace sheathing with material that matches the original or meets current code stiffness. Many pros use 7/16 OSB or 1/2 inch plywood. Stagger seams and end on the center of studs. Nail to schedule, which typically means

6 inches on edges and 12 inches in the field, but follow your local code. Integrate a weather resistive barrier. If you use housewrap, shingle lap it so water always sheds to the exterior. Around windows, reflash with self-adhered flashing tape that integrates with the WRB. Do not sandwich moisture. A well-detailed wall is hostile to termites because it stays drier.

I have seen repairs fail because someone skipped the WRB in a small patch. A year later, the patch was wet, the new studs showed dark staining, and moisture found its way back to the sill. The fix took longer the second time. Details pay you back.

Drywall repair after treatment and framing work

Termite drywall repair after termite treatment is part science, part artistry. After framing and sheathing are right, close the cavity. If treatment holes exist, cut out small rectangles that span from stud center to stud center. Back-block the opening with thin strips of plywood or drywall clips so the patch has something to bite into. Use paper tape and setting compound for the first coat to minimize shrinkage. Skim with a lightweight finish compound and feather at least 12 inches each side if you are matching a smooth wall.

Texture is where most repairs get spotted. If the wall has orange peel, dial in your hopper pressure and thickness on a scrap. For knockdown, timing is everything. Spray, wait until the sheen dulls, then knife it flat. A good match needs only spot priming and two coats of finish paint. If you can see the outline in raking light, you are not done yet.

When termites ran behind a tiled backsplash or a shower, I often replace the entire moisture zone. Patchwork there rarely holds. Modern backer boards and waterproofing membranes do not cost much compared to a second demo.

Floor joist repair, beams, and subfloor fixes

Once walls are open, related issues often show. Subterranean termites often travel along the sill and into the floor system. If you notice bouncy floors or cupped hardwood above, plan to crawl.

Termite floor joist repair depends on span, load, and how much is gone. Sistering with full-length lumber that bears on the same supports is the gold standard. Glue, clamp, and screw in a pattern that ensures composite action, not just a few nails near midspan. Where services prevent a full-length sister, a midspan beam can be added below with posts on proper footings. Avoid notching the bottom of joists; the tension zone lives there.

Termite beam repair is not a one-size job. Built-up wood beams can be dismantled and rebuilt a ply at a time. Solid sawn beams may need steel flitch plates bolted through to restore capacity. When end bearing is compromised, rebuild the pocket with new treated blocking and mechanical anchors, or set a new post on a footing. A sagging beam does not bounce back on its own. You often need to jack it slowly, no more than a quarter turn of a screw jack per day, to ease a structure back into shape without cracking everything above.

Termite subfloor repair is best done from above if you are already replacing flooring, or from below if access is good and finish floors are staying. Cut damaged panels back to the center of joists and add blocking to support new seams. Use tongue and groove plywood or OSB of matching thickness, glued and screwed to prevent squeaks. If bathrooms are involved, consider stepping up to a higher grade subfloor and adding a waterproof underlayment in wet zones. Water is the termite’s friend. Your job is to deny both.

Attic wood and roof framing

Drywood termites love attics. I have found ridge boards that looked fine until you touched them, then turned into coffee grounds. Termite attic wood repair can be straightforward if you catch it early. Sister rafters from ridge to plate, fastening with structural screws, then re-establish collar ties or rafter ties per code. If purlins and struts are present, replace any crushed bearings and refresh the load path down to a wall or beam below.

Trusses demand special care. Do not cut or alter a truss without a stamped repair detail from an engineer or the truss manufacturer. A simple gusset fix drawn by a pro and installed with the right fasteners can restore full capacity. A homeowner with a nail gun and a guess cannot.

Attic ventilation and air sealing matter. Hot, stagnant attics are comfortable for drywood termites. Balanced intake and exhaust, along with sealed ceiling penetrations, will keep the attic drier and less inviting.

When to call a pro and what to ask

There is a point in every repair where the smartest move is to bring in experience. If loads are involved, if more than a few studs are affected, or if beams, joists, or trusses show damage, hire a contractor who regularly performs termite wood repair. Search phrases like termite repair near me, termite damage repair near me, or structural termite repair near me will bring up local options, but vet them. You want someone who understands both the bugs and the building.

Look for a wood repair contractor termite damage near me who can show:

- A state contractor’s license and insurance certificates that match the business name on the proposal.
- Recent, local references for termite wall repair, sill plate replacement, or framing repair with photos.
- A clear plan that starts with verifying treatment and includes shoring, removal, replacement, and envelope repair.
- Familiarity with permits and, when needed, a relationship with a structural engineer.
- Written scope, materials list, and a warranty that covers both labor and materials for a reasonable term.

If you live in an area with a competitive market, ask two or three contractors to price the same scope. The cheapest price sometimes hides missing steps like shoring or sheathing integration. Clarity in the proposal saves stress on site.

Costs, timelines, and what drives them

Numbers vary by region, access, and finish expectations, but patterns are consistent. Replacing isolated studs in an interior wall might run 200 to 400 dollars per stud including drywall patches. Termite sill plate repair commonly pencils out at 60 to 120 dollars per linear foot depending on anchors and access. Floor joist sistering may range from 300 to 900 dollars per joist. Beam repair is broader, from 2,000 for a small built-up wood beam to 8,000 or more for steel reinforcement or complex jacking with new posts and footings.

Termite wall repair that includes sheathing and siding or stucco patching ranges from 2,000 to 6,000 dollars for a small section, more if windows are involved. Drywall finish work after localized treatment holes might be a few hundred dollars per room if texture matching is minimal, but a full wall skim and repaint can climb past 1,200 dollars.

Timewise, a simple wall section is a two to four day job: day one demo and shoring, day two framing and sheathing, day three close-in and first coat of mud, day four finish and paint touch-ups. If stucco or complex siding is involved, add a week for drying and staging. Beam and joist work can stretch to two weeks if jacking is slow and inspections are required. Inspections pace the job. Build that into your plan.

Step-by-step sequence for a typical exterior wall with termite damage

- Confirm and complete termite treatment. Get documentation.
- Set temporary shoring and relieve the load from the damaged area.
- Open the wall, remove damaged studs, plates, and any compromised insulation.
- Replace framing members, starting with sill or bottom plates, then studs, then headers if needed.
- Install new sheathing, integrate WRB and flashings, close the exterior, then repair drywall and finishes inside.

On real jobs, you will adapt this sequence. If rain is in the forecast, you might close the exterior before finishing interior studs, as long as shoring is secure. Judgment matters.

Moisture control is your best long-term defense

Termites need moisture. Keep the house dry and you make their lives hard. Grade soil to fall away from the foundation at least 6 inches over the first 10 feet. Extend downspouts 6 feet from the house. In crawlspaces, a continuous vapor barrier with sealed seams goes a long way, and in damp climates, a properly sized dehumidifier or conditioned crawlspace changes the equation. In basements, fix hairline cracks that weep and consider perimeter drains if hydrostatic pressure is obvious.

Borate treatments on raw framing during repairs add insurance. They are not a reason to skip good building science, but they stack the odds in your favor. Close gaps around pipes and wires with sealants or fire-blocking foam. Eliminate wood-to-soil contact. Store firewood well away from the house and raised off the ground. If you have mulch against siding, pull it back. Termites happily use mulch as a bridge.

Schedule regular inspections. In high-pressure regions, an annual walkaround by a licensed pest company is money well spent. Inside the house, a spring and fall routine works: check under sinks, along baseboards in corners that never get vacuumed, and in the crawlspace or basement with a headlamp.

Special cases and smart compromises

Sometimes you cannot replace everything you want. On historic homes with plaster walls, a selective structural repair from the exterior can preserve original finishes. I have rebuilt a rotted corner by working from the outside only, then tying new studs into the existing lath gently, swapping nails for screws with fender washers as temporary clamps until plaster keys held. On midcentury homes with continuous brick veneer, access drives design. You might need to needle beam the wall from the interior to replace a sill plate while the brick stays in place.

Another compromise shows up when utility conflicts exist. A drain stack that snakes through three bays may make full stud replacement impractical without a plumber. In those cases, engineered steel straps and partial sisters, designed for the loads at hand, can restore capacity without moving the pipe. I would rather see a signed detail from an engineer and a strap job than a hacked plumbing offset and a gift-wrapped leak.

How to talk with insurers and inspectors

If the damage is sudden and linked to a covered peril like a leak from a broken pipe, insurers sometimes contribute. Pure termite damage is usually excluded. Still, document everything. Take photos before, during, and after. Keep invoices for treatment and repairs, especially if hidden conditions grow the scope. For inspectors, be straightforward. Show your shoring, your replacement members, your fastener schedules. Having the pest treatment paperwork on the jobsite shortens conversations.

What good looks like when you are done

A finished termite damage restoration should feel uneventful. Doors swing true, floors do not bounce, and walls are flat. The exterior patch sheds water with the rest of the wall. Inside, you cannot find the drywall patch under a raking light. In the crawlspace or attic, you see fresh wood tied to old with clean, consistent fasteners, and any steel that was added sits on proper footings with approved connectors. You do not smell mold or damp. If you can walk through your repair and point to each load path from roof to soil, you have done it right.

Termite damage repair is not glamorous, and nobody puts photos of a perfectly flashed sheathing patch on a postcard. But done well, it resets the clock on your house and makes it stronger than it was the day it was built. If you are scanning for local termite damage repair, or you are comparing estimates from a termite damage contractor near me, use the steps and standards here as your yardstick. The work is straightforward when sequenced well, and the peace of mind is worth every careful screw and properly lapped layer of wrap.