Termite treatment ends the active infestation, not the aftermath. After the techs pack up their hoses and monitors, you are left with a wall system that may look fine from the outside but carries hollow studs, tunneled plates, and gypsum soft enough to crumble under a finger. Getting back to a flat, paint-ready surface takes more than patching small holes. You need a plan that respects how houses breathe, how structures carry load, and how moisture drives both termites and mold.

I have repaired a lot of termite damage in everything from 1920s bungalows with horsehair plaster to modern townhomes with level 5 finishes. The smoothest results come when you blend pest control science with building science and old fashioned finish carpentry. Here is how that plays out, step by step, without skipping the judgment calls that keep repairs from telegraphing through your paint months later.

First, confirm the pests are gone and the wood is dry

Termite drywall repair after termite treatment should begin only after you are confident the colony is neutralized. Most licensed companies schedule a follow-up 7 to 14 days after a liquid termiticide or bait installation. Ask for a written clearance or a service ticket that notes active activity has ceased. If you still see pinhead-sized pellets at the baseboard, fresh mud straws on the slab, or that faint clicking inside the wall on quiet evenings, hold off.

Then check moisture. Termites chase water. The same leak that drew them into your wall can ruin new joint compound twice as fast as the bugs did. I carry a pinless moisture meter and a pin meter. Gypsum should read close to ambient, often in the 6 to 12 percent equivalent range depending on climate. Framing can be a little higher, but anything over the mid-teens in a conditioned space suggests a leak or trapped humidity. Set up a small dehumidifier if readings are high and trace the source before you open the wall. Skipping this step is how neat patches bubble, paint peels, and you call me back six months later with the same stains.

Open the wall with intent, not guesswork

Patching every injection hole from treatment is tempting, especially if a tech drilled a tidy grid. But drill holes do not tell the whole story. Use a stud finder, an inspection camera, and a tap test to map the damage. On drywall, a soft, dull sound usually marks delamination. In plaster, a hollow ring hints at keys lost to vibration and tunnels.

Cut back to sound material. I like to use a multi-tool to score a straight line, then a drywall saw. Keep cuts on the centerline of studs for easy reattachment. In termite wall repair, I often find that a 12 by 12 inch patch becomes a 24 by 48 inch opening once I expose a sill plate that looks like a biscotti. Do not fear the larger opening. Repairs go faster and finish smoother when you can see and reach everything.

Save a piece of the damaged wood before you toss it. Insurance adjusters sometimes ask for evidence of termite activity, and a photo of a gallery along with the crumbly sample can nudge a claim forward, especially when hidden damage connects to a covered leak.



Evaluate structure, then decide patch or rebuild

Termite damage reads like a spectrum. On one end, you have surface tunneling on paper-faced drywall with studs still firm, which is mostly a finish repair. On the other end, you have load paths compromised, where termite structural repair takes precedence and drywall is the last step. Here is how I sort it in the field:

Light damage looks like shredded paper facing, slight sponginess around baseboards, and studs that hold a screw firmly. In that case, scrape to solid, treat any localized frass, and plan on standard tape and mud.

Moderate damage shows as studs with channels and a sill plate that flakes. You can usually reinforce by scabbing or sistering new studs to the old, then blocking and moving on to board replacement. This counts as termite framing repair and termite wood repair, but it can be done without jacks.

Severe damage lives in floor systems and load bearing walls. You see subfloor edges that crumble, floor joists with deep galleries, or a termite beam repair that needs engineered lumber. Termite sill plate repair often accompanies this, along with termite floor joist repair when galleries run along the grain. In these cases, loop in a structural carpenter or engineer. For a built-up beam with one ply compromised, we might add a flitch plate or a new LVL adjacent, bolted per spec. For a sill on a raised foundation, we may need temporary shoring, careful jacking, then a new pressure treated plate with a capillary break. Subfloor surgery, especially termite subfloor repair over a damp crawlspace, begs for better ventilation or a ground vapor barrier before you close up.

In attics, termite attic wood repair tends to involve rafters with channeling near the ridge. Sistering a full-length rafter where practical is best. Short scabs only help with nailing, not structure.

Tools and materials that earn their keep

Use a simple kit rather than a truckload of gadgets. The right items make the job cleaner and the finish tighter.

- Moisture meter, oscillating multi-tool, and a drywall saw
- Studs, blocks, and structural screws for sistering where needed
- Type X or standard drywall to match existing thickness and rating
- Paper tape, setting compound, and all-purpose joint compound
- Stain-blocking primer, texture tools, and a dust-control setup

Avoid mesh tape on flat seams where movement is likely. Paper tape with setting compound builds a stronger joint, which matters when galleries have weakened the surrounding paper and you need a stout bridge.

A short path from open wall to flawless paint

Drywall repair has rhythm. Rush the early beats and the final coat will show every shortcut. This is the sequence I rely on for termite drywall repair after treatment.

- Treat lingering moisture or leaks, then remove loose material back to solid surfaces
- Reinforce structure where required, add backing and fire blocking
- Install drywall tight, fasten to sound framing, and prefill gaps
- Tape with paper and setting compound, then build and feather with lighter mud
- Match texture, prime with a solvent stain blocker, and finish coat

Those five lines hide a lot of craft. Prefilling with a hot mud reduces shrinkage. Feathering wide beats sanding deep. Priming with a solvent blocker like a shellac primer locks in tannins, nicotine, and the faint brown wicking you often see along old termite tubes. If you skip the blocker and go straight to latex, yellow stains can bleed through two or three color coats.

Matching the texture is half the battle

Homeowners notice texture mismatch faster than small color differences. I keep a shoebox of scrap boards, each sprayed with different densities of orange peel and knockdown. When I walk a job, I hold them up to the existing finish to pick nozzle size and air pressure. For orange peel, thin the compound a little more than you think and spray from 18 to 24 inches to keep droplets round. For knockdown, wait until the sheen dulls but the peaks still slump, then draw the knife lightly and keep the blade clean with a damp rag every two or three passes.

In old rooms with true smooth walls, I plan for a level 5 approach across the repair zone. That means a skim coat over a wider area and a final Watsonville licensed termite inspection roll-on skim with a microfiber nap to mimic roller stipple if the rest of the room has it. Harsh side light from windows will punish ridges. Move a work light along the wall at a low angle during sanding to spot flaws you will not see head on.

When plaster complicates the story

Prewar homes may have gypsum lath and plaster or wood lath and lime plaster. Termites love to run along the lath, and when you remove it, you may discover keys already broken. For a clean finish, I often cut back to a framing member and install drywall as a backer, then apply a setting base and a veneer coat. The trick is matching thickness. Measure the existing assembly, then choose 3/8 or 5/8 inch drywall to land flush. Screws do not grip in crumbly lath, so reach for framing or add a plywood backer. If your house is historic, ask the building department before you alter plaster in a protected area. Some cities want a like-for-like repair.

Health, dust, and termiticide odor

Modern termiticides have far less odor than the old formulations, but some people still notice a sweet or faintly chemical scent near treated baseboards for a week or two. Ventilate while you work. Dust is the bigger concern. Silica from joint compound and old plaster is a respiratory hazard. I set a box fan in a window, bring a HEPA vacuum, and use dust-control compound for the final coats. Keep pets and kids out of the work zone. Bag debris

instead of throwing it loose in a can, especially if you are removing termite frass and shredded paper backing, which float everywhere.

How much to open for a floor system

Subfloor galleries can show up as soft spots under vinyl or cupping along a hardwood seam. If the infestation came up from a crawlspace, plan to open from below if you can. Working on the underside allows you to sister floor joists, install metal hangers, and replace smaller subfloor panels without wrecking finished floors. When access is tight and the floor above must be opened, cut back to joist centerlines and be patient with the patch. A squeak after new flooring goes down is a tough conversation. Glue and screw the new subfloor, then consider a decoupling underlayment before tile.

Order of operations when utilities hide in the wall

Termite activity often concentrates near sources of moisture and warmth, which means near plumbing and sometimes electrical risers. Before you saw, open the panel and identify the circuits that feed that wall. Shut off power to a riser cavity if there is any doubt. In older homes, cloth-covered cable might be brittle where termites nested. Replace suspect sections while the wall is open. For plumbing, the green corrosion on copper can mark a slow weep that fed the colony. Now is the time to swap a trap arm or insulate a sweating line.

Permits, inspections, and when to call in help

Not every job draws a permit. Patching drywall rarely does. Structural termite repair, beam work, and sill plate replacement usually do. When a load bearing wall is in play, ask an engineer for a quick sketch and have the contractor pull a permit. Building departments are not trying to slow you down, they just want to see that load paths are restored. On resale, a permitted repair reads well.

If you search termite repair near me, you will find two kinds of companies. Some focus on pest control with a light repair wing. Others are full-scale contractors comfortable with termite beam repair, termite sill plate repair, and complex termite framing repair. Interview both. Ask who does the work, what fasteners and species they use for sistering, and how they protect new wood from future moisture. A reliable wood repair contractor termite damage near me should talk about blocking, shims, and bearing, not just foam and finish.

Costs that make sense and where the money goes

Numbers vary by region and finish level, but a few ranges hold up:

- Basic termite drywall repair in one room, including cutback, board replacement, tape, texture, and paint touch-up, often lands between 450 and 1,200 dollars, depending on size and texture matching.
- Termite wall repair with moderate framing sistering, backing, and larger board replacement usually sits between 1,200 and 3,500 dollars for a typical section of wall 8 to 12 feet long.
- Termite floor joist repair or termite subfloor repair in a small area can run 1,500 to 4,500 dollars, more if finished flooring removal and replacement is involved.
- Termite sill plate repair under a small load bearing section, with shoring, jacking, and new pressure treated lumber, often ranges from 2,500 to 7,500 dollars. Larger runs and tight crawlspaces push it higher.
- Termite beam repair or replacement with an LVL can span 4,000 to 12,000 dollars or more, especially with engineering and permits.

Labor is the big chunk. Texture matching and paint seem minor, yet those last 10 percent of hours make 90 percent of the visual difference. Materials are modest, but engineered lumber, hangers, and fasteners add up, as do HEPA filters and dust control gear.

Insurance is mixed. Many policies exclude termite damage, but they may cover hidden damage from a specific, sudden water leak that also nurtured a colony. Document everything, especially moisture sources and any rot outside termite galleries.

Common mistakes that ruin a smooth finish

I see the same missteps over and over. Patching only the obvious holes is one. Tunneling often undermines the paper face around the repair, so your knife drags ridges that reappear after paint. Cut wider and get to firm paper.

Another is skipping a solvent primer when you see brown wicking. Water-based primers sometimes let discoloration bleed through. Shellac-based or oil-based blockers stop it. Yes, they smell. Ventilate.

A third is mesh tape on butt joints in a moved wall. Mesh saves a step, but it is weaker than paper in flex. Over termite damage, where paper face strength is already compromised, the joint can crack at seasonal movement.

The fourth is texture mismatch from a can sprayed too close. Cans are fine for a tiny patch, but a compressor and hopper cup let you tune droplet size and pressure. If you must use an aerosol, practice on scrap and work from farther away in passes rather than flooding the area.

Last, painting a patched wall to the corner and stopping leaves a picture frame effect. Even with perfect color match, sheen and roller stipple differ. I plan repaints corner to corner whenever a repair sits on a major wall.

Making the structure better than you found it

Termites exploit weaknesses. When we put a wall back together, we can tighten details the original builder skipped. Add fire blocking at 10 feet vertically and at floor transitions. Block behind baseboards so you can fasten trim tight and seal to the floor, which helps with pest exclusion. If the exterior wall was missing a proper vapor retarder or faced insulation, correct it. Where plumbing sweats, add pipe insulation. On a crawlspace job, lay a 6 mil poly vapor barrier and condition the space or at least improve cross ventilation. Little changes push humidity down and make your termite damage restoration last.

How long the repair should take and why drying times matter

A small wall repair with light framing and a knockdown texture typically takes two to three visits. Day one for demo, framing, and hanging board. Day two for tape and first coat of setting compound, possibly second coat if humidity is low. Day three for skim, sand, texture, and primer. Add a day if you need a level 5 finish. In damp weather, do not rush the coats. Cool rooms and high humidity slow set times, so I keep a space heater or dehumidifier handy. Setting compound will harden on schedule, but your finish coats of all-purpose need true drying, not just set, to sand cleanly without pilling.

Structural termite repair adds days for shoring, inspections, and paint cure. Plan on a week or more if permits are involved.

A real-world example from a tricky corner

A split-level from the 1970s had a half wall at the stair, with a handrail mounted into a stud that termites had chewed. The drywall showed only a faint ripple. When we opened it, the stud crumbled and the top plate had galleries. The owner wanted the wall smooth, but also safer. We sistered a new SPF stud, set two Simpson angles to tie into the floor framing below, and added blocking on a 12 inch grid behind the gypsum so future rail anchors would hit solid wood. After hanging 5/8 inch board to match thickness, we taped with paper and hot mud, skimmed wide, and rolled a level 5 primer. The texture upstairs was light orange peel. We tuned the hopper, laid a light spray, and blended past the corner. The rail felt rock solid, and the wall vanished after paint. That job is the model I keep in mind when someone says they want a smooth finish, not just a patch.

Choosing the right pro, local and reliable

If you type termite damage repair near me or structural termite repair near me, focus on firms that show both pest literacy and building chops. I like to hear that the crew checks moisture, that they know the difference between a jack stud and a king stud, that they can explain why a sill plate needs a capillary break on a masonry stem wall. Ask for two references where the company handled both termite wood repair and final finishes. A local termite damage repair crew that lives on repeat business will be honest about schedule and the mess. If a termite damage contractor near me promises one visit and dust-free sanding for a big repair, question it. Quality takes time and smart containment.

Preventive habits that keep your walls smooth

Once you are back to flat and bright, keep it that way. Clear soil and mulch away from siding. Termites love contact between dirt and wood. Fix the small leaks quickly, especially at hose bibs and ice maker lines. Seal the gap at slab and sill with a quality sealant, which also helps with insects that follow the smallest drafts. If you live in a high-pressure area for subterranean termites, consider an annual inspection and keep your treatment warranty active. The cheapest termite repair services are the ones you never need again.

Bringing it all together

Repairing termite damage is a chain of careful choices. Start with proof the colony is gone, confirm the wall is dry, open to solid material, reinforce what carries load, and only then reach for the mud pan. Respect the details that make finishes disappear, from paper tape in hot mud to a primer that locks stains. When the job asks for more than you want to DIY, choose a pro who speaks fluently about both termites and timber. Whether your project is a tidy patch or a complex termite beam repair after shoring and permits, the standard is the same. You should be able to stand back, tilt your head in raking light, and see nothing but a smooth, honest wall.

If you are still staring at burrowed baseboards or soft corners and want a set of experienced eyes, look for local termite damage repair specialists rather than a general painter. The first cut set straight, the right structural fix, and a finish sequence tuned to your texture are what take a wounded room and make it look like nothing ever happened.