If you have never seen the inside of a sill plate chewed into a honeycomb, consider yourself lucky. Termites work quietly, then all at once, a harmless looking scuff turns into a soft spot you can press with a finger. I have walked into houses where a pretty coat of paint concealed studs that looked whole from the outside and crumbled like stale bread at the touch of a chisel. That is the reality of termite damage repair. Most of the time you can plan it. Sometimes you cannot wait.

Timing matters because wood carries loads. When termites consume the fibers that hold up floors, roofs, or walls, what used to be redundancy becomes a single point of failure. The goal of this guide is to help you spot the signs that call for immediate attention, understand what is at risk, and make smart choices about termite repair services without panic or guesswork.

When urgency is non-negotiable

Some indicators mean you should stop, inspect, and bring in help now. These are the kinds of issues that can escalate in days, not months, especially in humid seasons when colonies expand their foraging.

- Sagging or springy floors, especially near exterior walls or under bathrooms
- Doors or windows that suddenly stick, with new cracks at corners
- Baseboards or trim that collapse under light pressure or sound hollow
- Mud tubes on foundation walls that reappear within days of removal
- Fresh swarmers indoors in season, with discarded wings near sills or light sources

That is not a complete list, but it captures the red flags that usually point to structural involvement. Cosmetic damage such as minor pinholes in drywall can wait a few days for a planned visit, but a floor that feels like a trampoline rarely can.

Reading the story the house is telling

Termite activity often shows up as a mix of subtle and obvious clues. One client called about a stain the size of a coin on a first floor ceiling. It was not plumbing. The joist above had been tunneled from end to end, moisture wicked through the galleries, and the gypsum telegraphed the problem before the lumber failed. Here is how to interpret what you see.



Blistered or bubbling paint on wood sometimes looks like water damage, but when you press and feel a brittle crust with air behind it, termites may have eaten the backside of the board, leaving the paint film to bridge the gap. Tap the area. A dull thud often means solid wood. A papery rattle hints at voids.

Baseboards and door casings with small pinholes and fine, gritty frass collect on the floor or sill. Drywood termite pellets look like tiny ribbed capsules, often tan or coffee colored. Subterranean termites do not leave pellets like that, but they do build pencil thick mud tubes along concrete, stone, or brick to reach wood.

Floors that slope in older houses are common, but a sudden change is not. If you place a marble on the same stretch of floor for a week and see different behavior day to day, look underneath. Termite floor joist repair becomes urgent when the bottom edges of joists show furrows or loss of cross section, because bending strength falls fast with reduced depth.

Walls can hide trouble. Termite wall repair often begins when drywall seems chalky or the paint sags between studs like fabric. Poke at the lowest 8 inches above the baseboard. Subterranean termites prefer damp, ground adjacent areas. In basements and crawlspaces, **termite exterminator** a sill plate that you can gouge with a screwdriver needs attention the same week, if not sooner. Termite sill plate repair is not optional, since the plate transfers load from stud to foundation.

In attics, look for narrow runways of dirt on rafters or around the top plates, and for wood that has a layered, delaminated look. Termite attic wood repair is usually less time sensitive than a failing beam, but if you see daylight where a rafter birdsmouth should seat firmly on a wall, bring in a carpenter without delay.

Odors help too. A faint mildew smell in a crawlspace can be a moisture problem on its own, but pair it with soft wood and you have a two part issue, rot and insects, that accelerates structural loss. Termites love damp wood, and moisture amplifies the damage.

What exactly is at stake when wood fails

Think in terms of load paths. Roof loads push to rafters and then down to walls and beams. Floor loads travel through joists to beams and posts, then into sills and the foundation. When termites reduce the effective size of any of those members, the remaining section must carry the same load. Deflection increases, fasteners loosen, gypsum cracks at corners, doors twist, and floors bounce. The house does not collapse like a movie set. It sags, then creeps, then gives in one corner.

Termite structural repair starts with identifying which elements are structural and which are finish. Drywall, crown molding, and baseboards are finish. Studs, sill plates, beams, joists, and subfloor panels form the structure. A beam with 30 percent cross section loss near midspan is a different level of risk than a damaged piece of trim. It takes trained eyes to judge the threshold, but some rules of thumb help: if you can insert a screwdriver more than a quarter inch into a load bearing member along grain lines for several feet, you want a professional assessment soon.

First 48 hours if you suspect serious damage

If you see signs that point to structural termite damage, you can still make calm, practical moves while you schedule help.

- Keep loads light in suspect areas. Move bookcases, aquariums, or pianos off sagging floors.
- Photograph everything. Close ups of galleries, frass, mud tubes, and wide shots for context.
- Do not rip out finishes yet. Disturbing galleries scatters live termites and complicates treatment.

- In crawlspaces, set temporary posts only if you know what you are doing. A bad jack can make it worse.
- Call your pest control provider and a contractor who does termite wood repair the same day.

It is common to treat first and repair second, but there are exceptions. If a member is on the verge of failure, a contractor may shore up the area before treatment, then pull back supports after the colony is controlled. Communication between the pest tech and the carpenter prevents double work.

Choosing termite repair services without guesswork

Searches like termite repair near me or termite damage repair near me will return a mix of pest control companies, general contractors, and specialists. You often need both a licensed pest pro to stop the insects and a carpenter who handles termite framing repair or structural termite repair near me. Ask each company what part they handle. If a contractor says they repair termite damage to house structure but does not coordinate with the exterminator, you will end up scheduling twice and paying for repeated openings.

For structural repairs, look for crews comfortable with beams, sills, LVLs, and temporary shoring. A wood repair contractor termite damage near me should explain how they will carry loads during the fix. For major beam or foundation interface work, many municipalities require a permit and a simple letter from a structural engineer. It is not red tape for its own sake. An engineer will specify sizes for sister joists, species for replacements, and connector types, and they will document what was done. That helps if you sell the house or file an insurance claim.

Local termite damage repair is usually more responsive. Crews who work in your zip code know common details in your housing stock. In my area, for example, 1950s ranch homes often have undersized crawlspace beams that termites love. A local team will stock the typical sizes and understand crawlspace access limitations long before they quote.

How pros actually repair chewed wood

Termite wood repair ranges from surgical to wholesale replacement. The right choice depends on how much material is gone, where it is gone, and what the member does.

For studs and non critical blocking, carpenters may use dutchman patches, piecing in clean, treated wood where termites removed localized sections. If damage runs longer than 12 to 16 inches, full length sistering makes more sense. In termite framing repair, a sister is a new member, same size or larger, fastened to the old one along its length to restore capacity. Screws and structural adhesives help share loads. When rot and termites have reduced a stud to a shell, complete replacement from plate to plate is cleaner.

Beams demand respect. Termite beam repair may involve sandwiching the old member with LVL plies or steel flitch plates, seated on new or existing posts. Any beam work starts with temporary shoring to carry loads, then surgical demo, then install, then load transfer back. Miss a step and doors upstairs go out of square. A good crew moves slowly here and checks with a laser or water level as they go.

Sill plates tie walls to the foundation. Termite sill plate repair usually means lifting the wall a hair with bottle jacks and a spreader beam, cutting out the chewed sections a few feet at a time, and sliding in new pressure treated plate with proper anchor bolts or straps. Go too fast, drywall cracks. Lift unevenly, the roof sheathing can pop nails. The method matters more than the muscle.

Floors involve joists and subfloor. Termite floor joist repair runs on a spectrum. Mild damage might be addressed with sistering in species to match the original, often Southern yellow pine or Douglas fir in older homes. Deeper

loss near midspan can call for full replacement with careful notch and bearing details at the sill or beam. If termites ate the top edge where the subfloor bears, you may feel a soft seam underfoot. Termite subfloor repair focuses on the panel above, cutting back to the center of solid joists, then installing new tongue and groove or exterior rated panels with adhesive and ring shank nails or screws to kill squeaks.

Drywall is the face you see. After treatment and structural fixes, termite drywall repair after termite treatment is straightforward. Cut back to clean paper and firm gypsum, square edges, and install new sheets. Seam the joints with mesh or paper tape, set the screws enough to dimple but not tear, and plan on at least three coats of joint compound with light sanding. Prime with a stain blocking primer because termite galleries often carry fine soil that can bleed through latex.

Attic and roof elements get their own approach. Termite attic wood repair typically includes sistering rafters, replacing purlins, and reinforcing connections at the ridge and birdsmouth. In vented attics, add baffles to maintain airflow and dry out the space, because moisture invites both insects and rot.

Materials and treatments that hold up

You fix structure with structure, but materials help. Pressure treated lumber at sills and in crawlspaces gives insurance. Borate treated wood is another tool. It is less corrosive to metal connectors than some pressure treatments and excellent for interior framing that may be exposed to moisture or future infestations. In repair zones where complete removal of damaged fiber is hard, liquid borate can be applied to remaining wood to deter re infestation. Epoxy consolidants come up a lot. They have a place for small, non structural repairs like exterior trim, but they are not a substitute for section modulus in a beam or joist.

Fasteners matter. Sistered members should be clamped tight with a pattern of structural screws or bolts that matches the engineer’s notes. Joist hangers need the correct nails, not drywall screws. Where moisture is present, use hot dip galvanized or stainless hardware to slow corrosion.

Think sequence too. Most crews prefer treatment first, then repair, then final treatment barrier if needed. If you must open walls, coordinate with the pest control tech so they can reach galleries. When you close up, aim for tight sheathing and sealed penetrations to reduce moisture migration.

Costs and timelines you can expect

Every house is different, but patterns emerge. Small termite wall repair jobs, such as patching a few studs and replacing drywall in a bathroom wall, often fall in the low thousands depending on finishes. Termite floor joist repair under a kitchen can run a bit higher because of access, plumbing, and cabinets. Termite beam repair and termite sill plate repair can range wider, from a few thousand for sectional plate replacement to five figures if you are swapping long beams, adding posts, and working in a tight crawlspace.

Labor drives much of the cost. Crawlspaces at 14 inches of clearance take twice the time as a tall basement. Homes with plaster and lath take more care than drywall. In my experience, a straightforward termite subfloor repair in a living room, cut and replace one or two 4 by 8 sheets, can be a one day job for two carpenters. Replacing a chewed sill plate under a 20 foot wall with brick veneer can be a three day effort with jacking, bracing, and careful sequencing to avoid cracking the brick.

Expect the pest treatment itself to be priced separately. Whole house subterranean treatments vary by linear feet of foundation. Drywood fumigation is a different animal and is usually scheduled and billed apart from repairs. Ask providers to spell out what is included so you are not surprised.

DIY or hire it out

Plenty of handy homeowners handle portions of termite damage restoration. Pulling baseboards, opening a small inspection hole, and patching drywall afterward, those are within reach for many. Where I draw the line is anything that changes how your house carries weight. Temporary shoring, sistering joists, replacing sills, and anything that involves beams belongs to pros who own jacks, cribbing, and know how to use them. The risk is not just injury. A poorly placed jack can blow out a tile floor upstairs or twist a door frame that was fine before.

If you do tackle small tasks, coordinate. Do not treat with off the shelf products, then call a pro. It can interfere with how they diagnose and apply their termiticides or baits. Photograph before you close anything. Keep a folder. Insurers rarely cover termite damage, but some do when a plumbing leak led to moisture that then attracted termites. Good documentation helps.

Drying, drainage, and the long game

Termites follow water. After structural termite repair, go hunt down the conditions that made your house attractive. In crawlspaces, aim for ground vapor barriers that actually seal to piers, vents that are sized and operable where appropriate, and gutters that discharge away from the foundation. A dehumidifier on a humidistat in a wet basement costs less than repairing subfloor twice. Fix slow leaks. A wax ring gone bad under a toilet can rot a subfloor and invite a colony within months in warm climates.

Borate treatments on accessible framing add cheap insurance when applied correctly. In vulnerable areas like a garage sill where splash back is inevitable, consider fiber cement trims or PVC for finishes that touch concrete. Those do not feed termites. For structural elements that must be wood, leave inspection gaps. If you bring siding too close to grade, you hide the mud tubes that would have given you an early warning.

Coordinating the finish work without rework

Everyone wants the house to look whole again. Resist the urge to rush paint and flooring before the structure is fully addressed. I have seen beautiful new oak floors installed over a subfloor that needed one more sheet replaced. Six months later, the telltale seam telegraphed through. Plan the order: treatment, demo, shoring, structural repairs, sheathing, subfloor, finishes. Termite drywall repair after termite treatment should wait a few days, even a week, if you can, in case the pest pro wants to re inspect active galleries.

When patching finishes, match vapor profiles. If the wall had a vapor retarder, reinstall it. Use the same type of paint. Switching from oil base to latex without proper prep can cause blistering that looks like new termite damage and spooks everyone for no reason.

Finding and vetting help locally

Typing termite damage contractor near me pulls up a long list, not all equal. Ask three questions at the first call. Do you coordinate with pest control companies, or do I schedule separately. Have you done termite sill plate repair, beam reinforcement, and joist sistering in the last year, and can you show photos. How do you handle temporary shoring. The answers reveal competence fast.

Read reviews, but look for specifics. A note that says they fixed my sagging dining room floor and explained every step beats ten generic five star ratings. If you live in a town with a lot of older housing, choose a structural termite repair near me provider who mentions your era of construction. Balloon framed houses, for example, carry loads differently than platform framed ones, and that changes the repair.

Local termite damage repair also pays off when you need someone to come back. Even with the best work, houses move a little after a significant repair, and a quick touch up or a recheck six months later is easier with a crew that is close by. Keep in mind, the smallest companies can be excellent but booked. If time matters, you may call two. Just be open about it to avoid schedule collisions.

A quick walk through, room by room

Kitchens and baths sit over plumbing, so check under sinks and along cabinet toe kicks. Press with a termite damage inspector blunt tool, listen for crunch. If a dishwasher leaked for months, subfloor edges can wick water and invite termites. A wavy tile floor nearby deserves a look from below if possible.

Living rooms with fireplaces concentrate loads at the hearth. Termites like the wood trim there, but the structure to watch is the header or beam that carries the opening. If a mantel pulls away from the wall or cracks appear like a smile over the firebox, have someone probe the framing.

Bedrooms on second floors show damage indirectly. Doors that go out of square, cracks that radiate from the top corners of windows, and floors that bounce a bit near the middle of the span can all point to first floor joists or beams with damage.

Basements and crawlspaces tell the truth. Take a bright light. Look at the bottom corners of rim joists, where they meet the sill plates. Probe with care. If you see galleries that run along the grain, and your tool slips in more than you expect, flag it. Termite subfloor repair often begins here, where the rim and subfloor meet and create a highway along the edge.

Attics reward patience. Follow the top plates along exterior walls. If you see little strings of soil, you have active or recent activity. Poke rafters every couple of feet. They should be firm. A pocket knife should not sink. If it does, call.

The payoff for doing it right

I have seen houses settle back into themselves after proper termite damage restoration, like an old coat that gets cleaned and pressed. Doors swing true again. Floors firm up. The quiet stress that homeowners carry, waiting for the next creak, fades. It is not magic, just method: diagnose, stop the insects, repair what carries loads, then make it pretty.

The toughest part is the first call. Use the signs you see to set the pace. If your floors sag, your doors stick, your baseboards crumble, or fresh swarmers appear, act now. Look for termite damage repair near me and pick teams who speak plainly about termite wall repair, termite beam repair, and the shoring they will use. If your issue is smaller, plan it, stop the moisture, and budget for the work.

Wood is forgiving, more than most people think. Sister a joist correctly and it becomes part of a composite that is stronger than the original. Replace a sill plate in sections with care and your house will not notice. Termites are relentless, but they are not a death sentence for a house. With the right eyes, the right tools, and a steady hand, you can repair termite damage to house structure and go back to living in it, not worrying about it.