The first time I opened a wall and found galleries of hollowed studs, it felt like tapping a loaf of stale bread. The paint looked perfect, the baseboard crisp, yet my screwdriver slid straight into the wood with no resistance. Termites are quiet and methodical. By the time you spot a blister in drywall or a sag in the floor, they may have chewed through key load paths. That is why deciding whether to take on termite structural repair yourself, or bring in a specialist, is less about bravado and more about risk management.

I have repaired sill plates where the only thing keeping a house from sinking was a 1960s plaster wall acting as a brace. I have also coached handy homeowners through clean, small fixes after treatment, where a sistered joist and a weekend of careful work solved the problem for a few hundred dollars. The right choice depends on what is damaged, how much, and your tolerance for shoring, jacking, and inspections.

This guide breaks down how termites damage wood, what repairs involve, where DIY can make sense, when professional termite repair services are nonnegotiable, and the costs, logistics, and gotchas that rarely get discussed.

What termites actually do to a structure

Termites eat the soft springwood within lumber, leaving the harder latewood, paint, or paper facing intact. That creates deceptive shells of framing that look fine from the outside. In studs and plates, this reduces how much load a piece can carry. In joists and beams, it compromises bending strength and stiffness. You see this in floors that start to feel bouncy, doors that go out of square, or hairline cracks termite control treatments that creep across a ceiling line.

The worst losses are often where moisture concentrates. Sill plates in damp crawlspaces, floor joists above a chronically wet bathroom, beams near below-grade walls, and subflooring under old vinyl are frequent casualties. In attics, roof leaks may set the table for termites, so termite attic wood repair often pairs with patching roof sheathing and rafters.

One misconception persists: surface treatment or bait stations do not restore strength. Termite treatment stops the insect pressure. Termite damage repair is a separate, carpentry and structural task. Plan for both.

First, confirm the timeline and the scope

Before any wood repair begins, you need two things: confirmation that termites are controlled, and a realistic map of the damage.

- If you still see winged swarmers, fresh frass, or mud tubes that stay moist and active, call the pest control company back. A good contractor will not start termite wood repair until the pest issue is addressed and you have documentation. Many warranties require this sequence, and some municipalities will not sign off on structural termite repair without proof of treatment.
- Mapping damage is half detective work, half experience. Probe wood with an awl, not a hammer. A hammer tells you when wood is completely gone. An awl tells you when there is 40 percent left, which matters for deciding between reinforcement and replacement. An inexpensive moisture meter also helps, because termites often follow moisture. If a stud bay reads 18 to 25 percent, look closely at the bottom plate and any nearby sheathing.

If you plan to DIY, keep photos and notes for every area you open, and sketch rough load paths. If you hire out, a reputable wood repair contractor for termite damage will provide a written scope that names members

specifically: termite sill plate repair at south wall, four linear feet; termite floor joist repair at bathroom joist 2, sister LVL three-quarter length; termite beam repair at crawlspace beam B, steel flitch plate, eight feet. Vague language is a red flag.

What repair methods actually look like

Termite structural repair falls into a few buckets.

- Selective replacement. Cut out rotted or hollow wood, splice in new pressure treated sections with proper bearing. Common for sill plates, cripple walls, subfloor edges, and isolated studs. The trick is temporary support. For sill plates, you typically install temporary shoring posts to carry loads while you slide in new sections.
- Sistering or scabbing. Bolt or screw new lumber or LVL alongside weakened members. This is common for termite floor joist repair where damage is moderate and access is good. Sistering should run at least two thirds of the member’s length, ideally bearing on supports at both ends. Short scabs only help when the damage is very localized near midspan.
- Jacking and shoring. When floors have dropped, you often need to jack them back slowly, a quarter turn every couple of days, to avoid cracking finishes or binding doors. Shortcuts here cause more harm than termites did. Professionals carry house jacks, cribbing, and the patience to stage this work safely.
- Structural reinforcement with steel. Flitch plates, angle iron, or post caps are not glamorous, but they turn a marginal beam into a dependable one. A contractor will size hardware for the existing span. In older homes where beams are oddly sized, steel makes life easier.
- Consolidation and epoxy. Wood epoxies and consolidants have a place in termite wall repair and door or window trim where you need to save profiles and loads are light. They are not a cure for a compromised joist or beam. I have used epoxy to rebuild the edge of subfloor around a toilet flange when 80 percent of thickness was intact and a sistered joist carried the span. That is a narrow use case.
- Termite drywall repair after termite treatment. Termites do not eat gypsum, they eat the paper facing. Where tunnels or moisture have bubbled paint, you often need to cut out sections of drywall, replace insulation, and rehang, tape, and texture. This is a finish job, but electrical and plumbing in walls can complicate it.



Each of these methods looks straightforward on paper. In practice, the constraints of an existing house, plumbing, HVAC, and old remodels can turn a two hour plan into a two day puzzle.

A fast go or no-go checklist

Use this five point check before deciding whether to handle a repair yourself or call structural termite repair near me.

- Damage in primary structure. If a main beam, multiple adjacent floor joists, or a long run of sill plate is affected, call a pro. Cosmetic trim, isolated studs, or short, non load bearing sections are more DIY friendly.
- Need for jacking. If floors or headers have sagged more than a quarter inch, plan for staged jacking and shoring. This is pro territory unless you have experience.
- Access and safety. Tight crawlspaces, live knob and tube wiring, corroded gas lines, or active leaks push the job to a contractor with the equipment and insurance for confined work.
- Permits and inspections. Many jurisdictions require permits for structural repairs, especially on sills, beams, or framing near the foundation. If you do not want to navigate approvals, hire a termite damage contractor near me who handles permitting.
- Tools and helpers. A single homeowner with a drill and a circular saw can handle sistering a joist. Replacing a sill plate under a load bearing wall often takes two to three people, house jacks, temporary beams, and cribbing.

If any two of those boxes check red, I advise bringing in termite repair services. It is not an admission of defeat. It is a way to control risk.

Realistic cost ranges and what drives them

Costs vary with region and access. Crawlspace work is slower and harder than open basement or garage framing. In my experience across mixed markets:

- Termite sill plate repair runs about 60 to 120 dollars per linear foot when access is fair and walls remain in place. If exterior cladding has to be removed or masonry pockets rebuilt, that can climb to 180 to 250 dollars per foot.
- Termite floor joist repair by sistering is usually 350 to 900 dollars per joist depending on length, hangers, and plumbing or wiring to move. LVL sisters run more than standard SPF. Full joist replacement often costs 900 to 1,800 dollars per joist in tight conditions.
- Termite beam repair with steel reinforcement or partial replacement typically lands between 75 and 150 dollars per foot for simple spans. Custom steel or engineered beam swaps can push this to 200 to 350 dollars per foot.
- Termite subfloor repair costs vary widely. Replacing a 3 by 5 foot bathroom section might be 600 to 1,400 dollars if joists are sound. If the toilet flange, blocking, and underlayment all need work, add a few hundred.
- Termite wall repair involving a few studs and bottom plate, followed by termite drywall repair after termite treatment, often totals 900 to 2,500 dollars for a small wall section once finishes are returned to paint ready.

DIY materials for small jobs are modest: a pair of 2x10s, a box of structural screws, construction adhesive, joist hangers, and treated sill stock might run 250 to 450 dollars. The tools are the catch. If you need two house jacks, 6x6 cribbing, a Sawzall with carbide blades, rotary hammer for anchor bolts, and a framing nailer, you either rent or buy. Rentals can run 40 to 80 dollars per jack per week, plus bits and blades. Time is the other cost. A contractor who does termite damage restoration daily will move faster and with fewer surprises.

The sequencing that prevents callbacks

The best jobs follow a rhythm that respects pest control, structure, and finishes.

First, pest control treats and documents. If bait systems are used, allow time for colony elimination. With soil treatments or foaming, a week or two is usually enough before opening walls. Communicate with your pest pro. Some will reinspect at no charge and label treated areas, which helps carpenters decide where to open.

Second, open and assess. Start where signs are strongest, usually at the base of walls or around plumbing. Cut drywall to clean lines so patches are easier later. In crawlspaces, use headlamps, not flashlights in your mouth. Photograph everything before demo, then after demo, and again after framing.

Third, shore and repair. For termite framing repair, install temporary supports before removing any compromised member. If you have never built cribbing, read up or call in help. Pressure treated sill plates go on sill seal or membrane over concrete to prevent wicking. Anchor bolts or straps should match current code spacing, often every 4 to 6 feet, with closer spacing near corners.

Fourth, close and protect. Replace insulation with proper vapor control for your climate. Tightly air seal top and bottom plates to reduce moisture migration. In bathrooms and kitchens, add or upgrade exhaust fans to keep moisture down, which discourages new colonies.

Finally, schedule a pest control follow up. Many companies offer annual inspections, and that small fee is cheap insurance. Keep all receipts and photos for resale and for your own maintenance file.

Tools, materials, and techniques that separate strong from sloppy

Whether you DIY or hire, a few choices make termite wood repair last.

- Lumber. Use pressure treated for sill plates and any wood in contact with concrete or masonry. For sisters and replacements, kiln dried lumber often matches existing joists better and reduces future shrinkage. Engineered LVL makes great sisters where depth is tight and extra stiffness is wanted.
- Fasteners. Structural screws like 5/16 inch diameter lag alternatives pull sisters tight and are easier than through bolts in cramped spaces. Through bolts are still best for flitch plates and major beam reinforcement. Use joist hangers sized to the lumber, and fill every hole with approved hanger nails or structural screws, not drywall screws.
- Moisture and borates. After treatment by a licensed pro, I like to brush on a borate wood preservative to freshly cut ends and to exposed framing in crawlspaces, especially for local termite damage repair near areas that had water problems. It is not a substitute for pest control, but it adds resistance and deters other wood destroying organisms.
- Barriers and grading. Termites need moisture and access. During repairs, add sill gasket, improve vapor barriers on crawlspace soil, and check that grade slopes away from the foundation. Splash blocks and downspout extensions are low cost, high impact moves.
- Fire and mechanicals. Cutting and sistering around plumbing and ductwork demands care. Shim misaligned fixtures during repair rather than forcing floors back under strain. For electrical, keep clearance from knob and tube or have an electrician rework old runs. It is cheaper to fix these pieces while the framing is open than patch later.

Where DIY shines, and where it stumbles

A confident homeowner with basic framing tools can handle termite drywall repair after termite treatment, isolated stud replacement, and straightforward sistering when there is clear access and minimal load redistribution. A common DIY success: a bathroom where two joists have 18 inches of edge damage near the tub. With blocking, adhesive, and hanger supported sisters, that floor can be tighter than it was when built.

DIY stumbles when the project requires orchestrating both temporary structure and permanent structure. Replacing ten feet of termite eaten sill plate under a braced wall is simple in theory and hazardous in practice. I have seen DIY jacks punch through slab, studs bow because shoring was off by a half inch, and plaster ceilings crack in rooms thirty feet away because loads were lifted too fast. None of that is inevitable, but it is common.

There is also the permit and inspection factor. For termite wall repair in a load bearing assembly, many inspectors will want to see the repair plan, not just the result. Some will require an **termite exterminator** engineer's letter for beams and long sisters, especially in seismic zones. Professionals navigate this efficiently. Homeowners can do it too, but time and patience are needed.

Questions to ask a contractor before you sign

If you search termite repair near me or structural termite repair near me, you will find pest control companies that subcontract repairs, general contractors who do this occasionally, and specialty firms that only do termite damage restoration. Vet them with a few pointed questions.

- What is your sequence with the pest control company, and do you require treatment documentation before starting?
- How will you shore and protect loads during repair, and who signs off if jacking is needed?
- Will you replace or sister, and why? Show me on a sketch how long the sister members will be and where they will bear.
- What materials will you use for sill plates, bolts, and connectors, and how will you deal with existing plumbing or wiring in the path?
- What permits and inspections are required here, and do you handle them?

Good answers are specific, brief, and grounded in building science. You want to hear about bearing, load paths, moisture control, and code compliance. You do not want vague reassurances, or proposals that only patch drywall while leaving hollow studs behind.

Edge cases that change the calculus

Historic homes. Balloon framing makes termite framing repair trickier because studs run multiple stories. Cutting in fire blocks and managing loads during repair requires planning. Plaster and lath also complicate wall openings. Bring in a pro familiar with old stock if you have significant damage.

Masonry or brick veneer. Termite sill plate repair behind masonry demands careful temporary support of the veneer. Removing bricks without cracking the veneer is a learned skill. Budget more time, and do not rush.

Slab on grade with interior walls. Termites can ride foam or cracks. Interior partitions on slab can carry large loads around openings. What looks like a simple stud swap may tie into a hidden beam pocket. If you probe a partition and the damage is extensive, pause and reassess load paths.

High wind or seismic zones. Connector schedules are stricter. Anchor bolts, hold downs, and nailing patterns matter. A repair that would pass informally in a mild zone may fail inspection, and more importantly, fail when needed most.

Mixed damage with rot. Water damage plus termites changes everything. Wood that looks termite eaten may actually be a mix of decay and insect damage. Consolidants are less effective on decayed fibers. Dry everything to under 15 percent moisture before closing, or the problem will come back.

Insurance, documentation, and resale pragmatics

Most homeowners insurance policies exclude termite damage. A few cover sudden and accidental water damage that led to rot or mold, but not the termite portion. Plan to pay out of pocket for the repair termite damage to house scope. What insurance may cover is collateral work like rebuilding after a covered pipe leak, which can overlap with termite subfloor repair near kitchens and baths. Ask your adjuster, and separate estimates accordingly.

Documentation matters for resale. Keep:

- Treatment receipts and warranty terms.
- Before and after photos, especially of hidden work.
- Contractor scope and permits, with inspection sign offs.

Buyers fear invisible problems. Showing a clear, professional termite damage repair narrative calms those fears and supports price.

Balancing time, money, risk, and satisfaction

There is satisfaction in opening a wall, fixing what is broken, and closing it properly. If you pick the right scope, DIY termite wood repair can be economical and solid. Keep it to minor studs, short sisters, trim, and tidy drywall patches.

Call a professional when you face structural members, long sills, beam reinforcement, or any job that requires shoring and jacking. The best local termite damage repair teams do this work every week. They bring cribbing, house jacks, LVL stock, steel, and the habit of moving slowly when lifting loads. They also know which details save you headaches later, like adding sill gasket, swapping rusted anchor bolts, or rerouting a vulnerable pipe.

If I were advising a neighbor, I would start with an honest assessment. Walk the house with a bright light and an awl. Check floors for bounce near walls, probe baseboards in suspicious rooms, and look in the crawlspace if you have one. If damage is spotty and light, handle it confidently, with a call to pest control first. If you find long runs of hollow wood, sagging spans, or anything that makes your stomach tighten, search for termite damage repair near me and get at least two bids, preferably one from a company that specializes in structural repair. The money you spend there is less than the cost of a bad lift or a missed load path.

Termites are relentless, but they are not mystical. Good building practice beats them: dry, ventilated assemblies, proper barriers, and structural members sized and connected correctly. Do the work in the right order, choose your battles, and your house will feel solid under your feet again.