The first time I crawled under a hundred year old bungalow to assess termite damage, I remember two things clearly. The air smelled faintly sweet, the way old damp wood does, and the beam that should have felt like a baseball bat under my pry bar crumbled like stale bread. Termites are quiet workers. By the time most homeowners notice them, the insects have either been treated or moved on, and you are left to answer the hard questions: How bad is the damage, is the structure safe, and what will it take to make the house whole again? That is exactly what a termite damage repair inspection is built to answer.

An inspection for repair is not the same as a pest inspection. A pest control technician will confirm activity and Vanguard Termite Control treatments plan treatment. A repair specialist focuses on what the insects left behind, from gouged sill plates to honeycombed floor joists. If you are lining up termite repair services, knowing how the visit unfolds saves stress, reduces costs, and helps you make better choices about sequencing, permits, and materials.

## Why the repair inspection matters

Termite damage lives behind baseboards, inside wall cavities, and under floors. You cannot price, schedule, or pull permits for termite structural repair unless someone has traced the damage from start to finish. A good inspection sets the scope and prevents surprises later. It also reveals the path of the termites, which often follows moisture. That matters for durability, because even flawless termite wood repair will not last if leaks or soil contact continue.

Another reason is safety. If you have sagging floors, doors that rub, or a roofline with a dip, you need a trained eye to decide whether temporary shoring is required. I have called for shoring on maybe one in eight inspections, usually when a beam or sill has lost more than half its bearing capacity. Fast decisions here protect both the crew and your home.

## What an inspector actually looks for

Think of the repair inspection as two parallel efforts. One is a detective story, the other a structural checkup. The detective work maps the old termite galleries, finds mud tubes, and follows any soft or blistered wood to its edges. The structural checkup asks how each damaged member carries load, what has shifted, and which pieces are past saving.

The inspector will probe wood with an awl or screwdriver, not to destroy it, but to read resistance. Sound studs give a satisfying dull thud. Damaged studs feel spongy and let the tool sink in with almost no effort. In crawl spaces, we tap joists and beams and listen. A clean ring usually means solid wood. A flat note signals voids.

Moisture readings guide the search. Termites love damp wood. In practice, anything at or above the high teens for moisture content is suspicious in conditioned spaces. In crawl spaces without vapor barriers, 15 to 20 percent can still be normal during humid months, but numbers above that point to leaks, poor ventilation, or ground moisture. The inspector will also note grading, gutters, plantings against the foundation, and any wood-to-soil contact, since all of these drive future risk.

## What to do before the visit

A little prep makes the inspection faster and more accurate. You do not have to strip the house, but you do want access. If the crew cannot get to the suspected damage, they are guessing, and guesses become contingencies

on repair proposals.

Here is a short homeowner prep checklist that pays off:

- Clear access to crawl space hatches, attic scuttles, and mechanical rooms.
- Move stored items away from suspected walls or baseboards by at least three feet.
- Mark any soft spots in floors, sticky doors, or cracked plaster you have noticed.
- Have pest treatment records ready, including dates and products used.
- Unlock gates and make pets safe in a separate area.

If treatment has not yet occurred, ask whether the repair team prefers to inspect before or after chemical or bait systems are in place. Many of us like to see the raw evidence before it is disturbed. If treatment already happened, that is fine too. We will look for repair signatures such as plugged holes from foam injections or soil termiticide trenched around the foundation.

## How a professional inspection unfolds

Most repair inspections start outside. I walk the perimeter and look at grade slope, splashback from downspouts, and where decks or steps attach to the house. Mud tubes on foundation walls, frass on ledgers, or a hollow sounding deck post can tell you where to zero in.

From there, I want the lowest level. Crawl spaces reveal the truth about floor and beam performance. I check the rim joist, sill plate, and first bay or two of every joist. Where I see damage, I follow it. If a floor joist is compromised halfway along a span, I look for sistering options and check the beam and pier it ties into. I carry a small laser level to read sag across long runs.

Interior rooms come next. Blistered paint on baseboards, ripples in engineered wood floors, or hairline diagonal cracks at the upper corners of door trim can all track back to termite damage. When I suspect wall voids, I use a stud finder and a pinless moisture meter to map anomalies. If the homeowner approves small exploratory openings, I cut a patchable inspection hole behind a baseboard or inside a closet rather than in the middle of a finished wall.

Attics often get skipped by non-specialists, which is a mistake. Termite attic wood repair is less common, but when roof leaks or poor ventilation have driven moisture high, I sometimes find old galleries in rafters or collar ties. It is also a place to check for sagging ceiling joists if you have wavy plaster below.

Finally, I consolidate. If I suspect structural concerns, I draw a simple load path diagram and mark any members that require shoring or immediate attention. I assign each item a repair method class, such as replacement in kind, engineered sistering, steel flitch plate reinforcement, or epoxy consolidation for non-structural trim. That roadmap becomes your estimate.

## Typical problem areas and how they are handled

Sill plates take a beating in older homes. When I recommend termite sill plate repair, I explain that the sill ties the house to the foundation and provides a bearing surface for studs and joists. If termites ate the lower half of the sill, we may be able to jack the wall slightly and insert new pressure-treated segments in stages, working a few feet at a time. In seismic zones or high wind areas, we also replace or add anchor bolts and proper washers. Expect slow, careful work here. Rushing leads to cracked plaster and unhappy homeowners.

Floor joists come next on the leaderboard. Termite floor joist repair usually means sistering full length with new dimensional lumber glued and bolted to the original, bearing on the same supports. When damage sits near midspan, full-length sisters are best. If the damage is localized at an end, bearing splices with crush blocks can work, but they are fiddly and not my first choice. Where clearance is tight, I sometimes use LVL or steel plate sisters to achieve strength in a thinner section.

Beams are different. Termite beam repair is rarely a simple sister. A main girder that carries multiple joists and a long span controls how a house feels when you walk across it. If I can, I prefer to install a new engineered beam alongside the old and transfer the load, rather than trying to rehabilitate a severely honeycombed original. In partial damage cases, steel flitch plates bolted through the beam restore capacity without adding too much depth.

Subfloors get judged by feel. If you stand in a kitchen and the floor feels bouncy or you can see additional deflection when your partner steps near the sink, the subfloor might be chewed. Termite subfloor repair can be as simple as patching a section of tongue and groove nailer, or as involved as removing flooring to expose the full field and install new plywood layers. Tile complicates matters. You cannot patch tile over an inconsistent substrate and expect it to last, so plan for a larger affected area even if the termite damage looks localized.

Walls and drywall bring their own headaches. Termite wall repair usually combines structural fixes inside the stud bay with cosmetic restoration. If a stud is 30 percent gone at midspan, sistering a new stud and fastening it top and bottom can be enough. If the bottom plate is chewed, I cut back drywall, lift the studs slightly, and slide in a new treated plate. Termite drywall repair after termite treatment comes last in the sequence. You want all moisture down, framing firm and flat, and any pesticide off-gassing complete before you close the wall. If foam treatments left voids or brittle areas in the paper, skim coating smooths the finish.

Framing in general takes time to assess. Termite framing repair could touch headers, cripple studs, or blocking. In older houses, I often find small repairs that previous owners made with a bit of 1 by stock and finish nails. These are not structural, and we replace or supplement them. In the attic, damaged collar ties or rafter tails fall into the same bucket as wall framing. Repair methods rely on sistering with full bearing wherever practical.

## Tools and techniques you are likely to see

Most inspectors show up with a moisture meter, bright headlamp, an awl or probe, and a camera. On the repair side, the gear grows quickly. Bottle jacks and temporary shoring posts let us relieve load before we cut out bad material. Full-length sisters get glued with high-strength construction adhesive and secured with structural screws or through bolts, not drywall screws. Where we need a structural engineer, especially for significant termite structural repair, we bring them in early. Their stamped drawings smooth the path with building departments and often save money by allowing thinner but stronger members.

Epoxy consolidation has a place, but it is not a cure-all. I use it on window sills, decorative beams that do not carry load, and historic trim you cannot replace without ruining the look of a facade. I do not rely on epoxies for anything that supports weight, unless a licensed engineer has specified a system with proper bearing and fasteners.

For beams and girders, steel makes frequent cameos. Flitch plates sandwich an original beam between new steel sides, bolted in a staggered pattern. In tight basements, replacing a full-length girder may be impossible without major demolition. In those cases, plating can be the most economical route.

## How long the inspection takes, and what it costs

Most termite damage repair inspections for single family homes take 60 to 120 minutes onsite, plus time to draft the report and estimate. Larger or more complex properties, or houses with limited access, can stretch to half a day. If the scope looks substantial, I often schedule a return visit with a carpenter or engineer to confirm measurements and repair logistics.

Fees vary by region, but a standalone repair inspection by a contractor is often free if you proceed with the work and between a few hundred dollars and the low four figures if you only want a written scope and estimate. If you need stamped structural drawings, plan for an engineer’s site visit, which may run several hundred to a couple thousand dollars depending on complexity.




## What your report should contain

Expect a narrative description of the findings, photos that match locations, a prioritized scope, and an estimate with ranges. For example, I might label a sill plate as Priority 1 with a note about temporary shoring, a cluster of floor joists as Priority 2, and cosmetic drywall restoration as Priority 3. Where damage hides inside walls or under finishes, good reports include allowances and decision points, such as, open 8 linear feet of wall at front living room to verify stud and plate condition, add 10 to 20 percent contingency for hidden damage.

If permits are required, the report should flag them. Many jurisdictions require permits for structural work and for replacing more than a set area of drywall or subfloor. Your contractor should outline who handles permit applications and inspections.

## Coordinating with pest control and moisture management

Repair happens best on a dry, quiet foundation. If live termites are still active, treatment needs to precede major repairs. I ask homeowners to share treatment documentation so I can plan around any retreatment windows and make sure crew members are safe in recently treated spaces.

Moisture has to be addressed in the same breath as termites. Crawl space vapor barriers, proper grading, downspout extensions, and dehumidification in wet basements make all the difference. If your gutters dump next to a sill we just replaced, you are paying for the same repair again in a few years. When we build estimates, I line item these fixes along with the carpentry, so nothing gets lost.

## Sequencing and a realistic timeline

A well orchestrated termite damage restoration project follows a predictable rhythm. Homeowners often ask whether they can stay in the house, and the answer is usually yes for small scopes and no for large beam or whole room floor replacements. Noise, dust, and temporary loss of plumbing or kitchen access decide it more than anything else.

Here is a simple timeline for a typical repair sequence, assuming treatment is done:

- Day 1 to 2: Site protection, setup, and any temporary shoring.
- Day 2 to 5: Structural carpentry, including sill, joist, and beam repairs.
- Day 5 to 7: Subfloor and wall framing restoration, inspections as required.
- Day 7 to 10: Drywall, trim, and basic paint or floor patching.
- Ongoing: Moisture control improvements and final walkthrough.

Complex jobs run longer, and engineered beams or special order materials can add lead time. Building inspections also add waits between phases. Good contractors plan for that and keep you updated.

## Cost ranges, with context

No two houses match, but after enough projects, patterns show. Local labor rates dominate, followed by access and finish quality. Removing and saving historic plaster, custom millwork, or hardwood floors takes longer than working in a utility room.

As broad guidance, small termite wall repair with stud sistering and baseboard replacement might land in the low thousands. Termite floor joist repair for a room or two often falls into the mid to high thousands, especially if flooring must be removed and replaced. Termite sill plate repair along one wall with jacking and anchor bolts may span from the high thousands to tens of thousands, depending on length, access, and seismic requirements. Termite beam repair or full girder replacement with shoring and post adjustments often sits in the five to low six figure bracket on large homes, particularly if multiple trades are involved.

If you see an unusually low bid, ask to see the proposed repair method for each member. Price makes sense only when scope matches.

## Who should you hire, and how to vet them

Most homeowners start by searching for termite damage repair near me or structural termite repair near me. Those searches can surface a mix of general contractors, carpenters, and specialists who market termite repair services. What you want is a team that understands both carpentry and load paths, and that can coordinate with pest control.

I suggest you ask for at least two references for projects with similar scope, not just any repair. A wood repair contractor termite damage near me listing might show impressive photos, but you want to talk to someone whose sill plate or joists were restored, not a client who only had trim replaced. Ask who will be physically on your job, whether they handle permits, and if a structural engineer will be consulted for major members. A termite damage contractor near me is a fine query, as long as you also look at licensing and insurance. For significant work, you want a certificate of insurance sent directly from the carrier.

Local familiarity matters. A team that does local termite damage repair will know whether your building department expects engineered drawings for sistered joists, or if in your township a signed letter from a licensed contractor suffices. They will also know which products meet code for pressure-treated sill plates and how inspector preferences vary.

## Red flags during the inspection and estimate phase

Be wary if someone suggests doing termite structural repair without any mention of shoring where members are clearly compromised. I am also cautious when I see proposals to inject epoxy into structural members and call it a day. Epoxy has a place, but not as a substitute for lost section in load-bearing members. Another red flag is a repair plan that closes walls immediately after treatment without verifying moisture has normalized. Wood must be dry to keep termites and mold from returning.

If you feel rushed to sign the same day with a big discount, pause. Termite damage restoration deserves a clear scope. A serious pro will answer questions, show you photos of each area, and explain trade-offs plainly.

## Life after repairs, and preventing a second round

Once the work is complete, take care of the conditions that invited termites in the first place. Keep soil and mulch a few inches below siding. Extend downspouts at least four to six feet from the foundation. Maintain a vapor barrier in the crawl and consider conditioned crawl space strategies if you live in a humid climate. Fix slow leaks fast. A seasonal walk around with a flashlight and a screwdriver to test suspect trim takes twenty minutes and can save you a headache.

I also like to schedule a check-in six months after major repairs. Wood settles as loads redistribute. A second look catches fastener loosening or small cracks before they grow. If you have an ongoing pest service, keep it. Bait stations, annual inspections, and spot treatments remain a smart investment in the life of your house.

## A brief example from the field

A couple in a 1940s cape called after their dining room floor began to ripple. Pest control treated the active colony and referred them for repair. During inspection I found mud tubes on the foundation near a downspout that dumped water right at the corner. The sill plate along that wall was half gone, and three joists had more than 40 percent section loss over six feet. The beam was intact, but its bearing post sat on damp soil without a proper footing.

We planned termite sill plate repair in three stages, added temporary shoring, sistered the joists full length with LVL to fit the tight crawl, and poured a small footing for a new steel post beneath the beam. The subfloor needed patching over a 5 by 7 foot area, and the finished oak floor was laced in and refinished. We extended the downspout and added a vapor barrier. From first day of carpentry to final coats of poly, it took nine workdays with a pause for a mid-project inspection. Two years later, I got a holiday card with a photo of their family dinner in that room. That part makes the long days worth it.

## Balancing scope, safety, and budget

Repairing termite damage is a craft as much as a calculation. There are moments where you can safely preserve original material and others where replacement is the only wise path. Sistering a joist costs less than replacing a run of hardwood floor to access the top of a subfloor, but sometimes you need both to achieve a stiff, level feel. Historic homes ask for more patience and joinery skill. Newer homes with engineered products want different fasteners and adhesives. Matching the method to the house is what separates a patch from a proper repair.

If you are just starting to look for termite repair near me or deciding how to repair termite damage to house elements you care about, start with a thorough, honest inspection. Ask for photos and clear language. Expect

trade-offs and a few unknowns behind walls. A strong plan keeps those unknowns from turning into runaway costs.

When the inspector leaves, you should understand which parts of your home need attention, how the work will be sequenced, and what you can do to help. From termite attic wood repair that preserves a charming rafter profile, to careful termite framing repair that makes sticky doors swing true again, the best projects restore your house and your peace of mind.