Termites rarely make a dramatic entrance. They hide in the quiet parts of a wall, behind stucco or lap siding, tunneling through sill plates and sheathing until a screwdriver sinks in with no resistance. By the time you see bubbling paint, soft baseboard, or mud tubes climbing the foundation, the colony has already converted a slice of your house into lunch. When repair is focused on an exterior wall, the job is more than swapping a few boards. You are rebuilding the structural skin that keeps the house square, dry, and safe.

I have opened hundreds of walls that looked fine from ten feet away. Inside, the picture varies. Sometimes you find a few inches of chewed sill plate with clean, dry wood above. Other times the termites worked in lockstep with chronic moisture, and everything below the window line is compost. Good outcomes come from disciplined sequencing, choosing the right materials for the climate, and knowing where structure begins and cosmetic repair ends.

Why exterior wall damage escalates fast

An exterior wall is a load path and a weather barrier. The studs, plates, rim joist, and sheathing transfer roof and floor loads to the foundation. The sheathing also resists racking from wind or seismic forces. When termites damage framing along the bottom of a wall, you lose bearing and lateral strength at the same time. If the weather-resistive barrier and flashing are compromised, every storm can wet the new wood and invite a repeat.

With subterranean termites, you often see damage concentrated near the foundation, rim joists, and sill plates where wood touches concrete. Drywood termites can nest higher in the wall, often around window headers and trim. In either case, exterior sheathing replacement is not cosmetic. It restores structural bracing and the plane that keeps water out.

The first 24 hours after discovery

If you just learned you have termite activity, do two things before you swing a hammer. Schedule treatment with a licensed pest pro, and stabilize the area to limit moisture. Killing the colony is essential. I have seen homeowners replace entire walls only to watch fresh mud tubes appear the next season because soil treatment or baiting never happened. As for moisture, confirm downspouts are extended, grade slopes away from the house, and landscapers are not burying the siding in mulch. Termites love a damp buffet.

If floors near the wall feel springy, avoid heavy loads in that area until a contractor inspects. In severe cases, a temporary post with a screw jack under the rim or affected joists prevents sag.

Scoping the work without guessing

Good ***local Watsonville termite inspector*** scoping is part detective work, part restraint. You open only what you need to see, but enough to avoid surprises that blow the budget midstream. I start with a moisture meter, a small inspection camera through a drilled hole just above the sill, and a hammer test along the base. Mud tubes on the foundation get mapped. If the wall is stucco, I score and remove a test patch at the lower corner. With lap siding, one or two courses come off cleanly with a siding removal tool to expose the WRB.

Once you see the sheathing, probe at least 2 feet horizontally past obvious damage. Termite galleries can skip around, and the outer ply of plywood sometimes masks honeycombed cores. On rim joists, a 1 inch drill bit can reveal soft interiors, even when the surface looks normal. I flag any studs with more than a quarter section lost, any sill plate with continuous damage across more than a stud bay, and any header with crushed bearing.



Coordinating termite treatment with repair

Treat before you close the wall, not after. For subterranean termites, soil treatment at the foundation, trenching, and drilling through slabs or porches as needed should be in place early. If you are replacing a sill plate, a borate treatment on the new lumber and adjacent framing is worth the modest cost. For drywood termites, localized injection or whole structure fumigation may be recommended. Localized treatments are easier to sequence with wall rebuilds, though fumigation gives peace of mind if activity is scattered.

I routinely predrill replacement sill plates to accept future barrier work or bait station monitoring. It is easier to coordinate now than to drill through fresh finishes later.

A practical five-step workflow that avoids do-overs

- Confirm termite treatment plan and isolate utilities at the wall section. Set up dust control and lay protection inside.
- Remove finishes and open the exterior. Strip siding or cut stucco cleanly. Peel back WRB to expose the sheathing and framing.
- Shore and replace structure. Install temporary shoring if loads require it, then repair or replace sill plates, studs, headers, rim, and any damaged joists or subfloor. Sister or swap members as needed.
- Rebuild the envelope. Install new sheathing, integrate a continuous WRB, flash openings properly, add a rain screen if the cladding needs one, and reinstall or replace siding or stucco.
- Restore interiors. Replace insulation, repair drywall after termite treatment, prime with a vapor-permeable primer, and repaint. Monitor with periodic inspections.

That sequence is simple enough to memorize, yet flexible. I may change the order for a tall wall with a wide window, or when rain is coming and I want sheathing back on before dark.

Temporary shoring, the quiet hero

Anytime you are replacing a sill plate, multiple studs, or a rim joist, assume loads need support. In a one-story house with roof trusses bearing on exterior walls, a pair of adjustable steel posts and a top plate beneath the ceiling plane can carry the load while you cut out damaged wood. In a two-story section or where floor joists tie

into the wall, build a temporary stud wall a foot or two back from the existing line, tight to the structure above. For porch roofs and bump-outs, simple post shores often suffice.

The goal is minimal movement. Doors near the work should still latch after the repair. If they do not, the shoring was either inadequate or released unevenly.

Opening the wall and dealing with cladding

Cladding dictates the mess. Lap siding usually pries off in sections and can be saved if it is sound and you marked course numbers. Fiber cement is more brittle. Stucco needs a clean saw cut to a control joint or a corner, then lath snips and a pry bar. The important thing is to expose enough area to lap new WRB and flashing. On vinyl, panels unhook and rehook, but watch for brittle clips in cold weather.

Once the cladding is off, the WRB tells a story. If you see reverse laps, missing head flashing over windows, or WRB wrapped behind the sill instead of lapping to the face of the foundation, make a note. That wall was getting wet before termites arrived.

Sheathing replacement that lasts

Plywood and OSB both have a place. In humid or coastal climates, I lean toward plywood for its better edge hold and moisture tolerance. In arid regions with a ventilated rain screen, OSB can be fine. Structural sheathing often needs to meet a shear value on the plans or per prescriptive code. Match thickness and panel orientation. Fasten with nails long enough to reach framing by at least 1.5 inches, and follow an edge and field pattern appropriate for your wind or seismic zone.

If the original sheathing was fiberboard or gypsum and you are in a high wind area, consider upgrading to wood structural panels and adding hold-downs at corners. That is not just an energy upgrade, it is a safety upgrade. I sometimes replace a section with a modern integrated sheathing, such as a weather-resistive barrier laminated panel, but only if transitions to adjacent WRB can be done correctly. Mixing systems without proper seam tape or liquid flashing creates weak points.

The WRB and flashing details that keep termites bored

A continuous WRB that sheds water down and out does more to prevent future colonies than any single chemical treatment. Lap everything shingle-style. Where the wall meets concrete, run the WRB to a metal or flexible flashing that bridges to the foundation face. Kick-out flashing at roof to wall intersections keeps gutters from dumping water behind the siding. Window and door perimeters get a sequence that never changes in my notebook: sill pan or flexible flashing at the bottom, sides next, head last, with the top leg tucked under the WRB. Then I add back dams in pans so incidental water cannot run in.

Rain screen battens or drainage mats are hugely helpful under wood and fiber cement siding in damp climates. They keep the sheathing dry and starve termites of the constant moisture they love. On stucco, a two layer WRB and a weep screed at the base are essential. I have pulled off beautiful stucco jobs with no weeps and found soggy OSB ripe for infestation.

Replacing the sill plate and rim, the foundation of it all

Termite sill plate repair has rules. Use pressure treated lumber rated for ground contact where it bears on concrete. Isolate the plate from the slab or stem wall with a sill gasket or capillary break. If the existing anchor bolts are compromised or too short, we core and epoxy in new ones or add mechanical anchors that meet uplift

and shear requirements. I always check bolt spacing against code or the original drawings. When splicing a section of sill plate, stagger the joint from any rim joist or stud splices and use structural screws or straps to tie the assembly together.

For termite beam repair at the rim or band joist, I evaluate from inside as well. If floor joists are pocketed into a rotten rim, sistering may not be enough. Sometimes the right solution is to support the joists with a new ledger on the interior side, then replace the rim from the exterior. In crawl spaces, a borate treatment on the new rim and a clean vapor barrier on the soil can change the long term outlook by cutting humidity.

Studs, headers, and transfers

Termite framing repair is not a one trick job. Light damage to studs can be addressed with sisters that extend a minimum of 2 feet above and below the damage, fastened in a staggered pattern. Significant loss calls for full stud replacement, toe screwed or nailed to the plates and tied with straps if needed. Headers over windows and doors are special. If termites ate bearing points at the trimmer studs, the header itself might still be strong but has nowhere to land. Restore the load path first. Then consider the header. Laminated veneer lumber makes tight replacements in compact spaces and resists future swelling.

When I replace a header, I like to pull the interior casing to check for any bow or twist that could telegraph into a sticky sash. Fixing structure without re-squaring the opening is how callbacks happen.

Floor joists and subfloor at exterior walls

Termite floor joist repair is common in homes with poor drainage or planters against the foundation. If 10 to 20 percent of a joist web is gone, sistering is often sufficient. Sisters should bear over at least 3 feet or to the next support, glued and screwed. If the joist shoes are destroyed, replace the hangers with the correct nail type. For termite subfloor repair near exterior walls, cut back to the center of a joist, use blocking to support seams, and replace with like thickness plywood. If it is a bathroom or kitchen, upgrade to exterior glue plywood and seal cut edges.

Where I see the most hidden trouble is at cantilevered floors and balconies. Water intrusion starts at the outer rim, termites follow, and the damage travels inward. Those repairs require careful temporary support and sometimes engineered solutions.

Attic, roof tails, and the unvented corner

Termite attic wood repair and rafter tail replacements often share a root cause with exterior wall damage, usually a leak at the eave or a clogged gutter. If rafter tails are soft, open the soffit and work from underneath when possible. Replace tails with scarfed joints or concealed plates to keep the fascia line straight. In unvented roofs, be careful with spray foam around new wood. It can hide future issues. I prefer to repair, test for leaks with a hose, then close.

Interior finishes after treatment

Termite drywall repair after termite treatment is straightforward, but do not rush it. Let any wet framing dry to within a few percentage points of normal for your climate. Replace insulation with a proper vapor retarder where required. On the drywall, cut to the nearest stud center and use backers for clean seams. Prime with a high quality primer. If mud tubes stained the surface, a stain blocking primer prevents bleed through.

Floors sometimes cup near the repaired wall. If the moisture source is corrected and the subfloor is sound, many engineered floors flatten in a few weeks. Solid hardwood might need sanding after a drying period.

A short field story that still teaches me

A craftsman bungalow I worked on had a bay window that looked fine. Inside, the owner noticed ants, which turned out to be termite swarmers. Outside, the garden soil sat two inches above the weep screed. The sheathing behind the bay was mush, the sill had little left, and the rim joist was a sponge. We shored the roof with two temporary walls, cut the stucco clean, and discovered the original builder had skipped the pan flashing at the bay. Every storm funneled water into the assembly.

We replaced the sill with pressure treated lumber, epoxied new anchor bolts, installed plywood sheathing, and used a fluid applied flashing to create a real pan that kicked water out. The stucco went back with a proper weep screed, and we lowered the soil line 4 inches below the stucco edge. Three years later, I stopped by. The moisture levels were steady, no new activity, and the paint still looked fresh. The difference was not magic. It was drainage and details.

Recognizing when structure is at risk

- Persistent sag or a door out of square near the damaged wall
- Sill plate crumbling along more than one stud bay
- Rim joist soft enough to puncture with a screwdriver
- Multiple studs with over a quarter section lost
- Floor bounce that worsens week to week

If you see two or more of those, plan for shoring and a more comprehensive termite structural repair. Quick patches can make things more dangerous by shifting loads to already weakened members.

How much does exterior termite wall repair cost

Costs swing based on access, cladding type, and how far damage spread. I have seen light repairs, one bay wide with a sill plate patch and new sheathing, wrap in the 1,800 to 3,000 dollar range. A midrange job that opens 10 to 15 linear feet, replaces a continuous sill, a handful of studs, new plywood, WRB, and siding patching may land between 6,000 and 12,000 dollars. Larger projects with stucco removal and full re-stucco, window reflash, or structural upgrades can climb to 20,000 dollars or more. Additions like termite beam repair, subfloor replacement, or balcony remediation push the number higher.

Permits, engineering review for shear walls, and pest treatment are separate line items in most regions. In seismic zones, adding hold-downs or upgrading nailing patterns might be required during repair. Factor that in early.

DIY or hire a pro

Plenty of homeowners can handle light termite wood repair inside a crawl space or a simple sister to a stud. Once you are touching a sill plate, opening exterior cladding, or dealing with headers and rim joists, the work shifts to pro territory. Shoring, load paths, water management, and code compliance all converge. Search for termite repair services and ask direct questions. Have they performed termite wall repair with sheathing replacement on your cladding type. Do they photograph each step. Can they explain how they lap WRB and flashing at the foundation.

If you are looking up structural termite repair near me or termite damage repair near me, favor contractors who coordinate with licensed pest companies and include moisture management in their scope. The phrase repair termite damage to house should include a plan to prevent new damage, not just swap wood.

Choosing materials with climate in mind

- Coastal or humid zones benefit from plywood sheathing, stainless or hot dipped nails, and a ventilated rain screen under wood or fiber cement siding.
- Arid climates can do well with OSB sheathing and high quality housewrap, but still need kick-out flashing and ground clearance.
- In termite heavy regions, consider borate treated framing for replacement studs and plates above grade, then isolate from liquid water with good flashing.
- Where concrete patios or stoops meet walls, use metal flashing and a sealant designed for movement. Avoid burying siding edges in caulk, which traps water.
- For crawl spaces, a continuous vapor barrier and positive drainage change the moisture equation. Pair that with properly vented or sealed assemblies per local code.

Small choices ripple. A 20 dollar roll of flashing tape around a hose bib can save a 4,000 dollar sheathing repair later.

Permits, inspections, and documentation

Exterior wall repairs that affect structure or weather barriers usually require permits. Inspectors appreciate clarity. Provide photos of the opened wall, measurements of damaged sections, and your repair plan. If you need engineered details for shear walls or anchor replacements, bring those drawings. Take mid-project photos that show shoring, fastener patterns on sheathing, and WRB laps. When you sell the house, that photo set is worth more than a line on a disclosure.

Keeping termites uninterested after the repair

Termite damage restoration ends when the wall is back together, but prevention begins the same day.

- Maintain ground clearance. Keep soil and mulch 4 to 6 inches below siding or stucco weep edges.
- Control water. Extend downspouts 5 to 10 feet from the foundation and correct negative grade.
- Eliminate wood to ground contact. Replace rotted trim or kick plates with treated or composite options, and keep firewood off the exterior wall.
- Monitor. Schedule yearly inspections with your pest company, and check for mud tubes or blistering paint after storms.
- Seal penetrations. Recaulk utility entries with a high quality sealant and add flashings where missing.

These simple habits support the chemistry your pest company applied and protect the carpentry you just paid for.

When walls meet floors, pay attention to details

The wall to slab or wall to foundation interface is a frequent leak path. If you can see daylight under the sill from the interior, air and water can move freely. I like a compressible sill gasket over concrete to break capillary

wicking, then a metal or flexible flashing that returns water to the exterior face. On raised floors, I seal the rim joist to subfloor joint with a compatible sealant before insulation goes in. Those lines of defense slow humidity, which slows termite interest.

In basements, check for efflorescence on the inside of the wall. It is a salt trail that marks where moisture moves. Treating that makes termite wood repair last because dry wood is boring wood to a termite.

Siding and stucco, the final skin

With siding, reinstall courses with care. Blind nail fiber cement at the specified exposure and edge distances. For wood, preprime cut edges. On vinyl, do not overdrive nails. The panel should hang, not clamp tight. With stucco, follow a cure schedule. Scratch, brown, and color coats need time. Rushing traps moisture and can blister paint later. At the base, make sure the weep screed is open. If landscapers bury it next season, you are back where you started.

Color match is its own craft. Patches almost always read differently in certain light. If the budget allows, repaint corner to corner on an elevation. It looks better and seals the whole wall.

Finding the right help

Typing termite repair near me into a search bar will return a list, but the filter is your interview. Ask to see a recent exterior termite wall repair with sheathing replacement. Look for local termite damage repair specialists who understand your region’s codes and weather. A good wood repair contractor for termite damage will talk as comfortably about WRB laps and kick-out flashing as they do about studs and sill plates. If the conversation is only about replacing wood and not about why the damage happened, keep looking. The best termite damage contractor near me pitches prevention as part of the bid, not an optional add-on.

The quiet payoff

The best compliment after a termite wall repair is no compliment at all. Doors close like they used to. The wall is plumb, the siding lies flat, and storms come and go without drama. Under the paint is a stack of choices that make the house safer and less appetizing to pests. Termites are relentless generalists. They are also predictable. If you remove chronic moisture, restore structural continuity, and build the envelope to drain, your repaired wall will age without telling stories.

Exterior termite wall repair and sheathing replacement looks like a carpentry job from the curb. Up close, it is structure, building science, and patience. Done right, it is also the last time you open that wall for a very long while.