If your floor has started to feel springy, spongy, or oddly noisy, you might be feeling the kind of dread that only a homeowner with termite damage understands. Subfloors carry the loads you do not see, and when termites hollow out the wood beneath, the damage stays hidden until the structure loses stiffness. I have opened up kitchens where the vinyl looked perfect, yet a screwdriver slid through the subfloor like it was cake. The owners swore it felt fine last season. Termites work in quiet shadows, and by the time you hear creaking or see a hairline crack along a baseboard, the colony may have carved out a network of galleries across joists and plates.

The good news is that termite subfloor repair follows clear, well tested steps. With the right containment, temporary support, and material choices, you can restore a solid walking surface and protect the structure that hangs on it. The trick is to pair proper pest treatment with disciplined carpentry. One without the other only buys you time.

How termites undermine floors

Termites need moisture and food. In a home, wood in contact with damp soil or humid crawl spaces checks both boxes. Mud tubes climb foundation walls, sill plates wick moisture, and the first victims are usually the rim joist, sill plate, and the lower third of floor joists near the foundation. From there, damage radiates under bathrooms, kitchens, and entryways. Subfloor panels, often OSB or plywood, lose cross section and delaminate, then a tile line pops, a toilet leans, or the fridge starts to wobble because the floor is no longer in plane.

Different species attack in different patterns. Subterranean termites build tubes and often leave a thin veneer of sound wood, a dangerous illusion of strength. Drywood termites tend to be found higher, in attic rafters or above grade framing, leaving pepper-like https://baran.is/baran-bydur-felagsmonnum-sinum-a-heilsuretta-namskeid/#comment-6250 frass near pinholes. In the field, I treat every suspected case as structural until proven otherwise. A bent putty knife can read softness in a second. A moisture meter finds the wet pockets termites favor. If your crawl space smells earthy and you see tube highways on the piers, expect deeper involvement along the first two joists inboard from the rim.

The anatomy of a floor and why it matters for repair

A typical floor system relies on the path of load from finish floor, to subfloor panels, to joists, to beams or bearing walls, and finally into the foundation. When termites hollow a joist or the subfloor between joists, you lose stiffness and the load detours into whatever remains. Tiles crack not because the tile failed, but because deflection between supports exceeded what brittle finishes can tolerate. That is why a strong repair treats the entire path, not just the surface. If the sill plate is punky, new joists alone will not hold well. If the rim joist is compromised, joist hangers might be anchored to paper.

Repair also needs to consider span and species. A Douglas fir 2x10 spanning 12 feet behaves very differently from a southern pine 2x8 spanning 14 feet. I carry span tables or use a structural app, but the rule of thumb is simple, shorter spans and deeper members stiffen floors. That is where engineered options like LVLs come in for termite beam repair when original beams are deeply compromised.

Immediate safety and triage

If you feel a collapse risk, floor jacks and shoring posts come first, not demolition. I have seen a water heater tip a sagging platform and tear copper lines mid job. Controlled support prevents that kind of secondary disaster.

Before opening anything, look for utilities. Termite wall repair often reveals hidden wiring running through notched studs that are now too weak for new fasteners. Mark these hazards and plan your cuts.

Here is a compact checklist I give homeowners and crew leads when we first confirm termite activity in a floor system:

- Keep heavy loads off suspect areas, especially washers, refrigerators, pianos, or water heaters.
- Photograph and mark visible mud tubes, frass, and soft spots to guide both pest techs and carpenters.
- Schedule termite treatment before structural work, or coordinate same day if collapse risk requires immediate shoring.
- Ventilate damp crawl spaces and fix active leaks so wood can begin to dry.
- If the damage crosses into bearing walls, plan temporary walls under ceiling joists before any demo.

Treat first, then rebuild

Termite damage repair always starts with stopping the insects. You do not want to bury live activity under new wood. A licensed pest control company will identify the species and propose soil treatments, baits, or localized wood injections. For subterranean termites, trenching and applying termiticide along the foundation perimeter is common. I often see homeowners try to jump straight to flooring replacement, only to find new mud tubes a month later.

There is a rhythm to timing. Shoring and temporary repairs can happen right away for safety. Then, pest treatment. Then structural termite repair. If moisture drives the infestation, address that in parallel. Add vents, repair gutters, slope grade away from the house, and consider a crawl space vapor barrier. In some climates, a dehumidifier in a sealed crawl space pays back in fewer problems across the board.

Opening the floor without creating more damage

Once treated and safe, we open the floor with care. With tile, I cut grout lines to save as many tiles as possible for reinstall. With sheet vinyl or LVP, scored seams and a heat gun make controlled removal easier. Hardwood can be face nailed and patched back if the field is worth saving, but in older homes it is often better to repair the subfloor from below if there is crawl space access. If not, expect to remove a strip or field panel to gain clean work edges.

Cut subfloor panels back to the center of adjacent joists or add blocking to support new seams. I avoid slicing along a joist where old nails create an obstacle course for a saw blade. For badly deteriorated areas, the old panel may peel up by hand, which tells you everything about why your floor felt bad.

Evaluating joists, sills, and beams

Probe each joist in the damaged bay and the next bay over. Termites migrate along grain, so damage often crosses the first joist and fades out by the third. If your screwdriver sinks more than a quarter inch under modest pressure, plan reinforcement. For termite floor joist repair, sistering is often the most efficient. That means installing a new joist of the same depth alongside the damaged member, gluing and bolting or screwing on a staggered pattern. Where the original joist is too far gone to bear hangers, we hang the sister from the ledger or beam with new joist hangers sized for the load. In tight crawls, quartering an engineered member into two plies can make handling easier, then rebuild the section as a composite.

Sill plates deserve close attention. Termite sill plate repair often means lifting the wall slightly to slide in new treated stock. I set a temporary wall a foot or two inside the rim, lift with bottle jacks just enough to unload the bad sill, then swap in kiln dried after treatment lumber or naturally durable species like redwood where code allows. Every anchor bolt or strap gets replaced or resecured. If the rim joist is eaten, I replace it in segments, maintaining lateral support for the floor and wall while I go.

Termite beam repair follows similar logic, but the stakes are higher since beams carry multiple joists. Laminated veneer lumber or built up 2x members with structural adhesive and bolts can restore capacity. For posts, replace any that read damp and soft, add metal post bases to keep the new wood off concrete, and check that the load sits plumb. A skewed post tells on itself when the floor above is out of level.

Subfloor material choices and fastening that lasts

For termite subfloor repair, I favor tongue and groove plywood in 23/32 inch for typical joist spacing up to 16 inches on center. OSB performs fine when kept dry, but plywood tolerates incidental moisture better and grips screws more reliably in a repair context. If the room will get tile, add an underlayment layer or cement backer board per the tile manufacturer, and keep your deflection to L/360 or better across the span. In kitchens and baths, a second layer of 3/8 to 1/2 inch plywood, seams offset and not tied to joists, improves stiffness and decouples movement.

Use construction adhesive on joist tops, then ring shank nails or structural screws in a tight schedule. In older houses, 2x lumber can be dry and brittle, so predrilling for lag screws on sistered members prevents splits. Joist hangers, hurricane ties, and straps should match the manufacturer’s nail specs. Do not use drywall screws. They snap under shear. I have pulled out handfuls of broken black screws where someone tried to save a trip to the store.

Where moisture once collected, consider treated plywood patches. Just be aware that treated materials can corrode standard fasteners, so choose hot dipped galvanized or stainless steel hardware in those spots. Seal cut edges with a borate solution before install if termites were active nearby. It is cheap insurance.

A practical sequence that keeps the project clean and on schedule

Here is the five stage flow I follow on termite damage restoration when subfloors are involved:



- Stabilize, map, and treat. Shore any sagging sections, mark damage, coordinate termite repair services for full treatment, and fix active leaks.
- Select materials and plan structure. Decide on sistering or replacement for joists, sill plates, and beams. Order LVLs or treated lumber as needed. Pull permits if required.
- Open carefully and remove compromised wood. Protect finishes, demo the floor covering, cut subfloor back to solid support, and clear debris. Keep a clean path for pest techs to see previously hidden areas if treatment and demo overlap.
- Rebuild the structure. Install sisters, replace plates and rim sections, set new hangers and blocking, then install subfloor panels with adhesive and proper fasteners. Check level and deflection as you go.
- Restore finishes and monitor. Reinstall underlayment, tile backer, or hardwood. Complete termite drywall repair after termite treatment where walls were opened, then set a follow up inspection with your pest company within the recommended interval.

This sequence keeps people safe, coordinates trades efficiently, and prevents the common mistake of beautifying before the structure is sound.

Tying in adjacent systems, from walls to bathrooms

Termites rarely respect room boundaries. If your subfloor repair bumps into a bathroom, expect to pull the toilet and reset with a new flange and wax or rubber seal. If cabinets sit on a sinking section, I block and level them temporarily, then reinstall toe kicks after floor work. For tile, allow for different heights if the repaired area requires thicker build up to meet stiffness needs. Transitions are not a sin if they are clean and logical.

Termite wall repair often follows subfloor work along exterior walls. If studs at the bottom 6 to 12 inches are compromised, I scab on new material or insert full height studs and reframe plates as needed. That can mean opening drywall. Termite drywall repair after termite treatment is straightforward, but look for channels in insulation and wiring sheath that tell you how far the insects traveled. If the attic shows any frass or pinholes, plan for termite attic wood repair as a separate phase, usually after the wet spaces below are secure.

For homes with crawl spaces, think of access and future inspections. Add an inspection door if none exists, install a proper vapor barrier with sealed seams, and make sure no wood scraps are left behind. Termites love forgotten blocking and offcuts.

What repairs cost and why the range is wide

Homeowners naturally want numbers. No two jobs match, but real world ranges help plan. For a modest patch where termites chewed through subfloor around a toilet, including a new flange and underlayment, I often see totals between 800 and 2,000 dollars. If two to three joists need sistering under a kitchen along with 80 to 120 square feet of subfloor, material and labor can land in the 3,500 to 7,500 range, not counting finish flooring. When sill plate repair, rim replacement, and partial beam reinforcement are involved, the project can reach 10,000 to 20,000 dollars or more, especially if access is tight or masonry pockets need work.

Factors that move price include species and availability of matching lumber, finish complexity, tile or hardwood salvage, plumbing or electrical reroutes, and local permitting. Pest treatment is typically a separate line, anywhere from a few hundred for localized drywood treatment to several thousand for full perimeter subterranean termite programs. If you hear one piece of advice on cost, make it this, do not skip the pest contract to save money. Structural work without a treatment plan is an expensive bandage.

When to involve specialists and how to choose them

DIY has its place. Replacing a few sheets of subfloor above clean, dry joists is a weekend project for a carpentry minded person. But if your screwdriver sinks into the sill plate, if the rim is soft, or if the floor feels out of level across a long span, bring in help. Search for structural termite repair near me, and screen for companies that coordinate closely with licensed pest operators. Ask for references on termite structural repair, not just general remodeling. A contractor seasoned in termite wood repair will know to check for hidden damage at bearing points and will be ready with temporary shoring.

If you are looking for termite damage repair near me or a termite damage contractor near me, vet them with a few specifics. They should discuss shoring first, they should be willing to sister or replace members rather than skim coat damage with fillers, and they should talk honestly about moisture management. For homeowners who want to stay hyper local, local termite damage repair firms often have the advantage of knowing soil types and neighborhood construction quirks. On the pest side, make sure the company offers a service agreement with follow ups. Termites are persistent, and a one time spray is not a plan.

If you need beam work or unusual spans, a structural engineer’s hour or two on site is rarely wasted. An engineer can specify LVL sizes, bolt patterns, and hanger types that turn a good repair into a bulletproof one. Many jurisdictions require permits for structural changes, and inspectors appreciate stamped notes on a drawing. It keeps the project clean, legal, and future buyer friendly.

Moisture control, the quiet hero of long term success

Every lasting termite repair rides on dry, ventilated conditions. Start with gutters that clear water well away from the foundation. Bring grade down where mulch or soil sits high against siding. In crawl spaces, I like a minimum of 6 mil poly vapor barrier, overlapped and sealed at seams, with seams taped and edges run up piers a few inches. If vents alone cannot keep humidity below about 60 percent in warm months, consider a sealed crawl with a dehumidifier and a dedicated drain. Borate sprays on vulnerable framing and sill areas add a layer of protection that deters future feeding, especially around bathrooms and kitchens.

Indoors, fix small plumbing weeps. A pinhole in an ice maker line can drip for months, softening subfloor and drawing pests. In tub surrounds, maintain caulk lines, and in tiled floors, keep grout sealed as part of regular care. Termites do not eat tile, but they love the wet substrate beneath it.

Details that separate strong repairs from weak ones

Trade work shines in small choices. When sistering joists for termite floor joist repair, make the sisters bear on the same supports as the originals whenever possible. Full span sisters beat partial patches. Where full length is blocked, lap at least several feet past the damage in each direction, and fasten in a staggered pattern top and bottom. Use structural adhesive between members for composite action. Add solid blocking at midspan or at concentrated loads like under islands. If you discover the original layout had joists at 19.2 inches on center, consider infilling to 16 inches or even 12 inches on center in the repair zone for stiffer performance.

When tackling termite sill plate repair in brick ledges, cut back mortar that locks in rotten wood, reset flashing properly, and insert capillary breaks where possible. For rim replacements, replace ledger bolts or lag screws with new hardware and verify spacing per current code. An old ledger bolted every 32 inches with random hardware should be brought up to modern standards. If an attached deck sits on the same rim that had termite damage, evaluate the deck connection thoroughly. That is a life safety item, not a cosmetic choice.

For termite wall repair that intersects with subfloor work, check the first pair of studs at corners and at window and door jacks. Termites love these clusters. Replace damaged sections in full lengths if possible. When partial stud repairs must happen, use long, overlapping scabs and glue and screw both sides. Keep the load path unbroken by tying new studs tightly to plates with proper nails and metal straps.

Coordinating finishes without hiding problems

After structure, finishes can be fun again. Tile goes back on a flat, properly backed floor, not a patched patch. Hardwood transitions should feel intentional, with saddles or reducers that do not trip toes. If the floor height changed, address door swings and trim. For painted rooms, primer over new drywall patches before paint so sheen remains consistent. Document the work for your records and for any future appraisal. Buyers and inspectors respond well to evidence that termite damage was treated, that structural members were replaced or reinforced properly, and that pest treatment remains active.

If your insurance policy covers part of repair termite damage to house costs, your adjuster will want clear photos before and after, invoices from both pest control and carpentry, and a description of the cause and remedy. Keep your documentation tight and chronological.

Finding the right help without getting lost online

Search terms matter. People often type termite repair near me or wood repair contractor termite damage near me late at night after a scare. Use that to build a list, then vet by phone. Ask whether they have handled termite framing repair, whether they coordinate with pest operators, and how they approach temporary shoring. Good pros will answer in specifics, not generalities. They should be comfortable talking about termite beam repair, floor stiffness targets, and moisture control fixes like vapor barriers and grading changes. If they flinch at the word permit, keep looking.

Expect two to three bids for scope clarity. The lowest number is not always the best plan. Compare the steps, materials, and timing each contractor outlines. The one who talks about the load path, not just the pretty floor, probably understands the work.

What a solid, repaired floor feels like

When a termite subfloor repair goes right, you feel it underfoot. The bounce is gone, doors swing square, and cabinet drawers stop creeping open on their own. The bathroom stops whispering with every step. More important, you have a structure that can take the daily abuse of life without hiding new trouble. I like to leave a small, discreet access panel in crawl spaces we have worked under, labeled with the date, the pest company, and the lumber species used. That little tag pays off years later when someone else wonders what was done.

Termites are part of the ecology around us. Homes sit inside that system, not outside it. When you bring together treatment, smart carpentry, and moisture discipline, you keep the balance on your side. If you are staring at a soft spot and feeling overwhelmed, start with safety, call the pest pro, and sketch a repair plan that respects how your house actually carries weight. Solid floors are not just a luxury. They are the foundation for everything that makes a house feel like home.