Moisture, warmth, and food. Bathrooms and kitchens offer termites all three. By the time sagging tile or a spongy patch by the toilet tips you off, the insects have often eaten quietly for months, sometimes years. Repairs in these rooms demand more care than a simple patch of plywood, because plumbing fixtures, tile finishes, and load paths all converge here. If the goal is to repair termite damage to house structure so it stays fixed, you need to think like a carpenter and a plumber at the same time.

I have opened plenty of bathroom floors that looked passable from above, only to find a lacework of tunnels in the subfloor and rim joist. Kitchens tell a similar story behind the sink base or dishwasher, where tiny leaks run down supply lines and give subterranean termites a steady water source. With the right plan, you can complete termite subfloor repair without drama, but the plan starts before you pick up a pry bar.

First rule, stop the insects and the water

No repair lasts if termites or moisture remain. Before you touch framing, confirm that a licensed pest control operator has performed treatment and that it has had time to work. If you are planning termite drywall repair after termite treatment, date it to start at least one to two weeks after the chemical barrier or bait application. In very active cases, I wait a month, then recheck for activity with monitoring stations or a fresh inspection.

At the same time, track every moisture source. Common culprits in bathrooms include a leaking toilet wax ring, failed shower pan liner, pinholes in copper supplies, sweating toilet tanks in humid rooms, and missing caulk around tub aprons. Kitchens often hide slow leaks in dishwasher hoses, undersink traps, and refrigerator supply lines. Fix the plumbing before you rebuild the floor. If the room has a crawlspace below, look for condensation on ductwork and poor ventilation that keeps the underfloor damp.

What termite damage looks like under wet rooms

Termite wood repair under kitchens and bathrooms has a look you learn to recognize. Subfloors can delaminate or crumble around plumbing penetrations. Termite tubes climb foundation walls and rim joists. Floor joists look intact from a distance but crumble at the bottom when prodded with an awl. In worst cases, interior partitions act like beams across a failing floor, telegraphing as cracked grout lines or doors that stick. The pattern is rarely uniform. Expect the worst damage within 3 to 4 feet of the wettest fixture.

Not all decay is from insects. Fungal rot follows long term saturation and smells musty. Termites leave mud in galleries. Both compromise strength. Your repair strategy is similar either way, but rot usually travels broader and softer, while termite structural repair often focuses on load bearing members with tunneling that runs along the grain.

Scoping the structure without destroying finishes you want to keep

Bathrooms and kitchens often have finishes you hope to save: intact wall tile, custom cabinets, stone counters. Spend real time on the assessment so you only open what you must. From the crawlspace or basement, probe the underside of the subfloor with an awl or screwdriver. If it sinks more than 1/8 inch with moderate pressure, you likely need to cut out that section. Mark joist locations with a chalk line. A moisture meter helps map the wet zone. A borescope camera through a small test hole near the toilet flange can save a lot of demo if you can see the subfloor edges.

Look at the whole load path. Subfloors sit on joists, which sit on beams, which transfer to posts and sill plates. When termites reach a sill, the damage may extend under adjacent rooms. If you see settlement at the exterior wall or a crushed rim joist, factor in termite sill plate repair or termite beam repair as part of your scope. That ups the stakes and often calls for a structural engineer or an experienced contractor specializing in termite structural repair.

Safety and temporary shoring

Floors fail gradually, then suddenly. Before you cut, add temporary support. In crawlspaces that allow access, set screw jacks or post shores under the damaged zone, tight to a straight 4x6 or LVL strongback that spans several joists. Spread the load with solid pads. In basements with headroom, telescoping steel posts work well. I rarely remove more than one joist bay of subfloor at a time without shoring.

If a wall sits on the damaged floor, it is not really a nonbearing wall any longer. It is bearing on a bad deck. Build a temporary support wall a foot or two away, on sound framing. Two rows of 2x4 studs under a top plate, tight to the ceiling framing, are often enough for bathroom and kitchen spans.



Materials that stand up to wet rooms

I prefer exterior grade plywood for subfloor patches in wet rooms, not OSB. A 3/4 inch tongue and groove panel matches many existing floors and gives you the stiffness tile needs. For serious tile installations, some pros use two layers of plywood, such as 5/8 plus 1/2 with joints offset, then a decoupling membrane or cement backer. For vinyl or sheet goods, a single 3/4 layer and a thin underlayment usually suffice. Adhesives matter. A high quality construction adhesive rated for subfloors reduces squeaks and stiffens the assembly. For fasteners, use exterior coated screws or nails. Screws bite better into sistered material and let you draw a panel tight.

When replacing joists, match species and grade where you can, or step up in grade. Southern yellow pine No. 2 or better performs well. In tight quarters, an LVL rip makes a good sister, but it is heavy and needs predrilling near edges to avoid splitting. Treat cut ends of new framing with a borate solution to add a layer of insurance. Do not put pressure treated plywood directly under tile without understanding the movement behavior, since wet service treatment can make panels expand and contract more than stable substrates.

The heart of it, subfloor and joist repairs that work

Most bathroom and kitchen termite subfloor repair jobs combine two approaches. You replace weakened subfloor panels, and you reinforce or replace compromised joists. The specifics vary by room and finish.

When a toilet has leaked long enough for termites to follow the moisture, you often find a halo of damage around the flange. The cleanest cutout removes the entire panel from joist center to joist center, at least 6 inches past the soft area. If the damage spans more than one joist bay, I stagger the seams so no two joints land on the same joist. Block all unsupported panel edges with solid 2x framing glued and screwed to the joists below. If a joist top edge is chewed, sister a new member tight under the panel seam so fasteners have solid bite.

Joist repairs fall into three common patterns. Scabbing replaces only the damaged segment of a joist with a matching piece that overlaps the sound portion by at least 3 to 4 feet, glued and fastened in a tight pattern from both sides when space allows. Sistering runs a full length new member alongside, sharing the load with the old one. Full replacement removes the damaged joist and transfers loads to a new joist from bearing to bearing. In bathrooms and kitchens, plumbing often blocks full replacement, so creative sistering becomes the tool of choice. When notching around pipes, follow notch and bore rules so you do not weaken the reinforcement you just added. If an interior load wall sits across joists, use multiple sisters or add a header below to catch the line load, a small version of termite framing repair that protects the whole floor.

Tile adds a layer of complexity. Grout does not like flex. Aim for floor deflection limits of L over 360 for ceramic and L over 720 for natural stone. That might push you toward a second layer of plywood or closer joist spacing under a tub. For kitchens with hardwood or engineered flooring, control seasonal movement by sealing new panels and allowing a small perimeter gap under the base to let the floor move.

Around the toilet, tub, and shower

Toilets disguise subfloor rot better than any other fixture. Pull the toilet and examine the flange. If it is cast iron set into lead, plan on careful disassembly or a repair coupling. If it is PVC glued to a closet bend, you may have the option to cut and replace. The flange should sit on top of the finished floor or at least flush with it. I aim for the flange to end about 1/4 inch above the finished tile to keep the wax ring in its sweet spot. If you raise the floor with new sheathing and underlayment, adjust the flange height with an approved spacer or a new flange, not a stack of wax rings.

Shower pans hide failures at the curb and corners where liners fold. If you are keeping the pan, patch subfloor only to sound wood that reaches under the curb and the first wall stud bay. If pan replacement is on the table, consider a modern bonded membrane over a solid, properly sloped substrate. Tubs can sit on platforms that bridge multiple joists. If termites ate the platform, rebuild it with straight, dry stock and a continuous bearing surface for the tub feet or apron. For cast iron tubs, support matters. For acrylic, make sure the bottom contacts a solid bed of mortar or foam as the manufacturer specifies.

Dishwashers and sinks are less dramatic, but the water line to a fridge has wrecked more kitchen subfloors than you would think. If that corner feels soft, pull the appliance and probe. Use a pan or tray under the new unit and add a shutoff you can reach without gymnastics.

Walls, plates, and drywall

Termite wall repair in wet rooms comes up when subfloor damage creeps under partitions. If the bottom plate is eaten, you can cut nails with a multitool, lift the wall with a jack and a spreader board, and slip in a treated or borate treated replacement plate. Termite sill plate repair at exterior walls requires more care, since that plate often carries roof or second story loads. In crawlspace houses, you can pair a temporary beam and posts with

partial removal of sheathing to do a clean plate swap. If the rim joist is affected, consider a rim patch or sister from inside with blocking that restores the load path.

Drywall rarely escapes unscathed when floors move. After structural work, address termite drywall repair after termite treatment by cutting back to the next stud, installing backing, and using setting compound for the first coat so the patch hardens even in damp conditions. Tile wainscots sometimes crack at a single vertical line. If the tile is salvageable, you can rake the grout, inject a small amount of flexible sealant deep in the joint, and regrout. If the substrate moved too much, that is a signal the floor still needs stiffening.

Tools and supplies that make the work cleaner

- Oscillating multi tool with plunge blades for precise subfloor cuts
- Right angle drill and long shank bits for sistering near plumbing
- Construction adhesive rated for subfloors, plus exterior coated screws
- Borate wood treatment, spray bottle, and personal protective gear
- Laser level or water level to map floor deflection before and after

A focused step sequence for a toilet area patch

- Shut off water, remove toilet, cap the supply, and protect the drain opening
- Map joists from below or with a stud finder, then cut the subfloor panel back to clean joist centers
- Sister or scab damaged joists with glued and screwed members, and add blocking at all panel edges
- Drop in new exterior grade plywood, glued to joists, screwed every 6 to 8 inches on edges and 12 inches in the field
- Adjust toilet flange height to the new finished floor, then set underlayment or tile, reinstall the toilet, and test for leaks

Permits, engineering, and when to call reinforcements

Some projects go beyond homeowner scope. If a beam or exterior wall line shows settlement, if you spot crushed sill plates, or if more than a third of the joists in a room need work, you are squarely in termite structural repair territory. A short site visit from a structural engineer costs termite exterminator a few hundred dollars in many regions and pays for itself when an inspector wants calculations or when you need a clean framing detail to bridge a tricky span.

Look for contractors with specific experience in termite damage restoration. Search terms like certified termite inspector Watsonville termite repair services, structural termite repair near me, and wood repair contractor termite damage near me can get you close, but interview with purpose. Ask to see photos of previous bathroom and kitchen repairs, not just porch beams. A local termite damage repair contractor near me listing is a starting point, not a guarantee. The good ones will talk through moisture control as much as they talk about jacks and joists.

Cost and timeline, realistic bands

Numbers vary by region, but a modest bathroom termite subfloor repair that involves a single joist bay, a flange adjustment, and a tile patch might land in the 800 to 2,500 dollar range for labor and materials, plus tile work if a pro sets it. If two to three joists need sistering and you are rebuilding around a tub, that can climb to 3,000 to

6,000 dollars. Termite floor joist repair combined with termite sill plate repair at an exterior wall is a different scale, often 5,000 to 12,000 dollars depending on access and the need for temporary shoring. Kitchen projects tend to run higher because cabinets and counters complicate access. If a beam needs reinforcement, plan a structural visit and expect a few thousand more.

Timelines run from a day for a simple cutout to a week for a thorough rebuild with tile reinstallation. Add time if plumbing permit inspections or pest control follow ups are in the mix. Build slack into the schedule for drying if you discover active moisture. Rushing to close a wet cavity traps problems.

Access makes or breaks the plan

Working from below in a crawlspace is often the cleanest path. You can sister joists and add blocking without tearing out finished tile. The tradeoff is comfort and clearances. If you have less than 18 inches of crawlspace height, the labor effort rises sharply. In basements, ductwork and wires can block your sistering runs. From above, you gain access but risk damaging finishes and fixtures.

Second story bathrooms over finished ceilings bring another call. Sometimes it is worth cutting and repairing the ceiling below to get clean access to joists and plumbing, rather than expanding the footprint of the floor demo upstairs. A neat drywall patch below beats a bigger tile patch above, especially with discontinued tile. Discuss this with clients early to manage expectations.

Glues, screws, and the feel underfoot

You can deepen a floor’s stiffness without changing joists by paying attention to the bond between subfloor and framing. I prefer to butter every joist with a serpentine bead of adhesive before setting a panel. Then I screw the panel tight, working from the center out to avoid trapped air. Music to my ears is the dead thud of a stiff floor, not a hollow drum. If an old floor squeaked before, it will squeak worse after a partial rebuild unless you secure edges and land panel joints on solid framing. A 2x rip set on edge between joists, glued and screwed to both neighbors, can kill a squeak you cannot reach any other way.

Hidden edges and oddities

Cabinet toekicks hide a lot. I have found termite galleries that run the full length of a sink base, with a subfloor that looked fine two inches in front of the kick. Removing the base is a pain, but if the floor deflects there, it is worth the effort. On the flip side, kitchen islands often sit on isolated pads or bridging cleats. When you repair under them, make sure the new load transfers to solid joists or blocking, not to an orphaned sheet of plywood.

Older homes with diagonal plank subfloors need a different touch. You can patch with plywood, but I like to add blocking so the new panel edges do not hang in space between diagonal planks. Fasten the planks to the joists first, then add the overlay. It keeps the repair tight and reduces long term nail pop in floors above.

Finishes that forgive, and those that do not

Sheet vinyl and luxury vinyl tile are forgiving after repairs. They mask small seams if you prepare a smooth underlayment. Hardwood needs acclimation and careful feathering. Stone is the least forgiving. If a stone tiled bathroom suffered termite damage, budget for more stiffening and a wider repair area to avoid future cracks. Thinset and membranes have their place, but they cannot rescue a springy floor.

Grout color matching after a partial tile replacement is tricky. Even if you have the original color code, the old grout has aged. Make sample boards. Sometimes the right choice is a soft joint at the repair boundaries to let the new area move a hair differently without telegraphing a crack.

Prevention once the dust settles

Termite damage repair is half of the story. The other half is not doing it twice. Address grade and drainage outside. Soil should slope away from the foundation. Downspouts need extensions. Keep mulch and soil at least a few inches below siding and weep screeds. In crawlspaces, target 12 to 18 inches of clear air under joists, a ground vapor barrier, and enough vents or a sealed, conditioned approach that controls humidity. Where code allows, borate treat vulnerable framing in bathrooms and kitchens before you close, especially around plumbing penetrations.

Inside, update toilet seals, caulk tub perimeters with high quality sealant, and add shutoffs with quarter turn valves so leaks get addressed quickly. Consider a smart leak detector under sinks and behind a fridge. Annual termite inspections are cheap insurance, and if you had one infestation, you are a candidate for another. For owners who like to DIY but want a safety net, line up a reliable professional for an annual quick check. Search phrases like termite damage repair near me or local termite damage repair are a practical way to build your shortlist, but lean on reviews that mention structural work, not just bait stations.

A quick note on beams and posts when kitchens get heavy

Kitchen remodels add weight. Stone counters, tile, dense islands. If you discovered termites while planning a new layout, use it as a moment to reassess loads. A point load from a stone topped island can sit right where a termite nibbled beam used to be. Termite beam repair might mean sistering a new LVL to the existing beam or adding a post and footing. Do not count on a patched subfloor to carry what a beam should. This is where a simple set of calcs from an engineer aligns your investment with long term performance.

When repairs are small, but the mindset is big

Not every bathroom needs a full tear out. Sometimes you cut a 2 by 2 foot square, sister a short section of joist, and move on. What matters is the habit of looking beyond the obvious. If the floor went soft by the toilet, peek at the base of the adjacent wall. If a dishwasher leaked, check the rim joist behind it. Use each repair as a checkpoint in a system. The more you connect the dots, the less likely you will be to revisit the same room for round two.

Termites are patient. A careful, whole room strategy is how you beat them, and that strategy applies from the first pest treatment to the last grout joint. Pair smart assessment with solid framing practice, select the right materials for wet service, and do not hurry the drying or the shoring. Whether you self perform or hire out to termite repair services, insist on the same fundamentals: strong connections, dry wood, a clear load path, and finishes supported by a stiff deck. Done right, a repaired bathroom or kitchen feels better underfoot than it did before the insects ever arrived.