



Do Your Own Termite Home Inspection

By DoMyOwn staff

830ea7583d6d341da568187e61c0fa7a

Doing your own termite inspection at home can definitely be intimidating, but there is also a lot of money to be saved in going it alone, especially if you are willing to put in the time and energy required. The following tips can help you perform a thorough and successful termite inspection right at home. Remember, you can always call in a professional at any time if you feel that further inspection is needed.

You Will Need

- 1) Coveralls: It is important to inspect the foundation walls close to the ground where it is muddy, especially inside of crawlspaces.
- 2) A bright flashlight - Good lighting will aid careful inspection of dark places such as basements or crawlspaces
- 3) A pocketknife or screwdriver- Such a tool will assist in probing rotted, moist, or suspect-looking wood for damage

Potential Problem Areas

These are the areas you will need to inspect very closely for signs of termite infestation. Keep in mind that Subterranean termites are typically found at or near ground level.

- Wooden elements of construction in basements and crawl spaces
- Window sills and frames (particularly in the basement), support posts, sub floors, supporting piers, joists, sub floors, joists, support posts, supporting piers, and wooden decks or porches.
- Areas where concrete elements meet wood, such as in steps, slabs, or porches
- Cracks in brick construction, expansion joints, or cement where termites might have gained entry
- Wood piles and debris near the foundation including tree stumps, exterior basement window and door frames, and fence posts.

Common Signs of Termite Infestation-What to look for

1. **"Swarms"**. When a colony exceeds a certain population, swarming occurs. Winged swarmer appearing in large numbers, especially near windows or light sources, indicate a nearby nest. These swarmer are a group of adult "reproductives" that have left the termite nest to establish a new one. Swarming behavior is most common in spring (March, April, May, and June) and early autumn (September and October), especially after warm, rainy days.

If you notice swarmer outside, it does not mean your home is infested, since they are most likely coming from an outdoor nest. Finding swarmer inside though should alert you to a growing infestation within your home. (It is not uncommon for these winged reproductives to be mistaken for "flying ants". Read the article about the difference between termites and carpenter ants.)

1. **Mud Tubes**. Subterranean termites will often make their nest in the soil (moisture source) and then build highways called "mud tubes" that run vertically or otherwise to connect the nest to a wooden food source. Mud tubes are a definite sign of termite infestation, but the absence of mud tubes does not mean that no infestations exist, since there are other ways that termites reach food sources.

Mud tubes can be broken open and inspected for live termites to determine whether the tunnel is active. If it is old, it will be dry and easily crumble.

2. **Piles of wings**. Before swarmer enter the next stage of development, they will shed their wings which are often left in scattered piles near windows or light sources.

3. **Live termites**. There are four different kinds of Subterranean termites:

- Primary Reproductives- Black to pale yellow-brown, pale wings with few visible veins; 1/4 to 3/8 inch long.
- Secondary Reproductives- White to cream in color; wingless, or very short wings

(winged reproductives)

- Workers- white in color, wingless, and 1/4 to 3/8 inch long.

(workers)

- Soldiers- Resemble workers in overall appearance, except with a slightly larger brownish head and more prominent mandibles or jaws.

(soldier)

4. **Buckling paint or little holes in wood.**

5. **Damaged wood.** Wood with sustained termite damage might look "crushed" at structural joints. If you tap the damaged wood with a hammer, you will hear a dull thud. Wood suspected of termite damaged can be further inspected by probing the surface with a screwdriver or pocket knife to expose tunnels. Subterranean termites excavate tunnels that run parallel to the grain.

6. **Wood Galleries** of Subterranean termites are lined with a mud-like material set in an irregular pattern, and an extremely thin layer of wood between the gallery and the outside wall.

View all [Termite Control](#) Products