HOMEOWNER ACTION CHECKLIST

Residential Termite Field Checklist

A step-by-step homeowner guide for spotting termite warning signs and risk conditions

How to use this checklist: Walk around accessible areas of your home periodically and look for termite warning signs and conditions that can increase termite risk. If you find suspected mud tubes, discarded wings, frass, live termites, or damaged wood, document what you see and consider a professional termite inspection before choosing a treatment.

1 Exterior Perimeter & Foundation Walkthrough

Done	Area Checked	Inspection Point / Warning Signs	Recommended Action
☐	**Foundation Wall & Slab**	Look for suspected earthen mud tubes on foundation walls, piers, crawl space supports, or exterior stucco.	Photograph the area and compare the signs with our termite identification guide.
☐	**Mulch & Soil Line**	Look for soil, mulch, or wood chips contacting siding or exterior wood.	Keep soil and mulch from contacting siding or wood. Where applicable, maintain visible clearance between soil grade and the lower edge of siding; a 6-inch clearance is commonly recommended.
☐	**Exterior Wood & Decks**	Look for wood-to-soil contact and exposed wood that sounds hollow or is easily penetrated when gently probed.	Note wood-to-soil contact or easily penetrated wood. Correct moisture or soil-contact conditions and have suspicious damage evaluated.
☐	**Window Sills & Eaves**	Look for discarded wings or pellet-like material beneath trim or other accessible wood.	Photograph or collect a sample for identification. Discarded wings or suspected frass warrant closer inspection but do not by themselves establish the extent of an infestation.

2 Interior & Crawlspace Checkpoints

Done	Inspection Zone	What to Look For	Reference / Next Step
☐	**Plumbing Penetrations**	Look for leaks, moisture, or gaps around accessible pipe and utility penetrations.	Fix leaks and note gaps around utility penetrations. Appropriate sealing can reduce potential entry points, but it does not replace termite inspection or treatment.
☐	**Baseboards & Door Casings**	Look for blistered paint, damaged trim, or marks that may resemble water damage.	Compare termite types when documenting uncertain signs.
☐	**Attic Rafters & Trusses**	Look only in safely accessible areas; do not disturb wiring or structural members.	Look for pellet-like frass beneath exposed wood, rafters, trim, or other accessible wood members. Photograph suspicious material before cleaning it up.

Digital Reference Resource
Read our research standards and methodology.

3 Identification Quick-Reference: Key Species

Warning signs can overlap. Species identification and the extent of an infestation may require a professional inspection.

Subterranean Termites

Common signs: Mud tubes, swarmers, or wood damage may be present.
Where they live: Colonies usually maintain a connection to soil or another moisture source.
Common professional approaches: Soil-applied termiticides and termite bait systems are among the methods used for subterranean termites. The appropriate method depends on the structure, termite species, infestation, and local requirements.

Drywood Termites

Common signs: Pellet-like frass, swarmers, or damage inside wood may be present.
Where they live: Colonies live in wood without a soil connection.
Treatment context: Drywood termite control may involve whole-structure or localized treatments. The choice depends on where infestations are located and how extensive they are.

4 Regional Termite Guides

Termite species and activity vary by location. These guides provide state-specific context.

Region	Local Context	State Guide
Florida	Multiple subterranean and drywood termite species occur in the state, including invasive termites in parts of Florida.	Florida Termite Guide
California	Both subterranean and drywood termites are important structural pests.	California Termite Guide
Louisiana	Subterranean termites, including Formosan termites, are an important structural concern.	Louisiana Termite Guide

5 What to Do If You Find Suspected Termite Signs

1. Document the evidence. Photograph suspected mud tubes, frass, discarded wings, damaged wood, or insects before cleaning or altering the area.

2. Keep a sample when practical. If you find insects or discarded wings, a sample can help with species identification.

3. Avoid choosing a treatment from one sign alone. Different termite types can require very different control approaches, and hidden infestations can be difficult to assess.

4. Get a professional inspection when active termites, suspected structural damage, recurring swarmers, or other significant signs are present.

5. Learn what the treatment options mean before accepting a proposal. Use the TermitePlan Treatment Decision Guide to compare approaches, limitations, and questions to ask.

Not Sure What the Signs Mean?

Compare termite types, warning signs, and treatment approaches before deciding what to do next.

Use the Termite Treatment Decision Guide