

Understanding Termite Inspections

This guide explains what a termite inspection is, when and why it's needed, how it works, and what loan programs or property types might require it.

Understanding Termite Inspections

A Comprehensive Guide by The Housing Assistant



Introduction

Termite inspections are an important part of the property due diligence process, particularly in areas prone to pest activity. This guide explains what a termite inspection is, when and why it's needed, how it works, and what loan programs or property types might require it.

What is a Termite Inspection?

A termite inspection is a visual assessment conducted by a licensed pest control professional to detect the presence of termites or other wood-destroying organisms (WDOs). It involves examining the property's structural components for signs of active infestations or past damage, including baseboards, crawlspaces, foundation edges, attics, and wooden framing.

When is a Termite Inspection Required?

Loan Type	Required?	Notes
VA	Yes	Required for all VA loans unless the property is in an exempt state.
FHA	Sometimes	Only when the appraiser notes possible infestation or damage.
USDA	Yes (regionally)	Typically required in high-risk zones.
Conventional	No	Only if an appraiser or borrower requests one or if evidence is found.

What Triggers a Termite Inspection?

- The home is located in a high-risk termite area (e.g., Southeast U.S., Gulf Coast, Pacific Northwest)

- The appraiser notes evidence of damage or infestation
- The borrower, lender, or HOA requests one
- A local jurisdiction mandates a WDO inspection

What's Inspected?

- Baseboards and interior walls
- Crawlspace and under-floor framing
- Foundation edges and garage walls
- Attics and roof framing
- Mud tubes and frass (termite droppings)

Subterranean termite inspections focus on soil contact and underground nests, while *drywood inspections* focus on visible wood within the structure.

Property Types That Often Require Termite Inspections

- Older homes with wooden framing
- Properties with crawlspaces or pier foundations
- Ground-level properties in humid regions
- Homes located in wooded or coastal areas

What Happens If Termites Are Found?

- The seller must typically treat the infestation and provide proof of extermination
- VA loans require reinspection and lender clearance
- Form NPMA-33 is commonly used to document inspections and treatments