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WHITE PAPER SERIES

**REPAIR SCOPE & COST EVALUATION  
CONSTRUCTION DAMAGE DISPUTES**

**Repair vs. Replacement | Estimating | Documentation**

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## **Introduction**

Disputes involving construction defects and property damage often center on three primary issues: causation, scope of repair, and cost valuation. These issues are frequently complicated by incomplete documentation, evolving site conditions, and differing interpretations between contractors, adjusters, and stakeholders. This article outlines a structured, defensible approach to evaluating these matters based on field inspection, industry standards, and practical construction experience.

## **Causation Analysis**

Causation is the foundation of any property damage or construction defect evaluation. A reliable opinion must distinguish between damage caused by a specific event, long-term deterioration, construction deficiencies, or maintenance-related conditions. This requires direct observation, documentation of existing conditions, and application of established construction principles. Opinions should be based on identifiable physical evidence and consistent with known building practices.

## **Scope of Repair**

Once causation is established, the next step is development of an appropriate repair scope. The scope must address all damaged components necessary to return the structure to its pre-loss or intended condition. This includes consideration of accessibility, sequencing of work, code requirements, and integration with existing construction. An incomplete or inconsistent scope often leads to disputes and cost discrepancies.

## **Repair vs. Replacement**

A key issue in many disputes is whether components should be repaired or replaced. This determination should be based on the extent of damage, feasibility of repair, material compatibility, and long-term performance. Partial repairs may not always be appropriate where damage is widespread or where repairs would result in non-uniform or functionally compromised construction.

## **Cost Valuation**

Cost evaluation must be grounded in realistic construction practices and current market conditions. Estimating tools such as Xactimate can be useful, but they must be applied in conjunction with field knowledge and project-specific considerations. Costs should reflect labor, materials, access constraints, and complexity of the work.

## **Wood Destroying Organism (WDO) Considerations**

WDO-related damage presents unique challenges due to its often concealed and progressive nature. Proper evaluation requires understanding of infestation patterns, structural impact, and appropriate repair methodologies. Failure to identify hidden damage can result in incomplete repairs and ongoing structural issues.

## **Conclusion**

A defensible evaluation of construction defects and property damage requires a methodical approach grounded in inspection, documentation, and industry standards. Clear, objective analysis of causation, scope, and cost provides a reliable framework for resolving disputes and supporting informed decision-making.

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Construction Defects | Property Damage | Litigation Support

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