

# Keep Your Foundation Strong



The majority of basement wetness problems stem from improper drainage or grading around the foundation

**T**he foundation of your home not only supports the entire structure, it keeps water from seeping into the basement of the home. Keeping the basement waterproofed and dry requires some care. It is not unusual for a house to experience basement wetness at some point in time. You can take measures that prevent moisture problems from developing.

Proper drainage and grading carries surface water away from the foundation. This is essential during periods of heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt. Surface water can be described as water from rainfall, sprinklers, hoses, etc.

### Gutters & Drainage

Gutters are used to divert the rain that falls on your roof away from your foundation. Roof runoff from a 2500 sq. ft. roof is equal to 1500 gallons for each 1 inch of rain. Factor this by the annual rainfall and it becomes clear that properly working rain gutters and downspouts are important in order to carry water away from the house.

Today, self-cleaning gutter protection systems are a very low maintenance way of keeping your gutters flowing. They are professionally installed and are available in new and retrofit systems. Be sure your downspouts are sound and unclogged as well.

### Grading

When your house was built, the yard was graded so that the ground would gently slope away from the house in all directions. Over time soil settles. This sometimes forms a low area which traps surface water. The collected water can then seep through the foundation into the basement. If this happens, fill these depressions and re-plant to prevent erosion.

Concrete walkways and patios

can settle too and cause water to run toward the foundation of the house. Flower beds and perennial gardens around the house should also be checked. Basement doors and windows should be properly sealed and caulked to prevent water entrance.

Never change the drainage pattern of your yard in such a way that water tends to run toward the house.

### Ground Water

If surface water is being properly diverted away from your foundation and you still have basement wetness, ground water may be the problem. If water seeps through the floor, at the joint between the floor and basement wall or at a lower point of the wall itself, it is usually due to the presence of ground water.

This may be caused by seasonal

high water tables or underground springs and seeps. If your home is in the flood plain of a nearby stream or creek, it may be affected during periods of heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt. If the house was built in the path of a natural drainageway or on a site that is lower than the surrounding area, you could also be affected.

Normally, a footing drainpipe is laid along the base of the foundation when a house is built. A basement wetness problem caused by ground water may indicate the pipe is either damaged or clogged.

If ground water is not properly channeled the resulting hydrostatic pressure can force water into the basement of your home through cracks in the floor and foundation walls. This problem needs to be corrected in order to prevent these cracks from enlarging.

