

The Importance of Proper Grading

Prior to the construction of your home, the elevation-the height of the finished first floor above the immediate surrounding land - was established. This height was established to make certain that the slope of the land was adequate to drain water away from the foundation. Obtaining - and maintaining - this slope is critical. It is recommended that this slope be a minimum drop of six (6) inches from contact at the foundation wall to a point six (6) feet away from it. Water must at no time be permitted to flow against or puddle adjacent to the walls.

Your builder must have established this initial grading from the home as well as other possible grading features on the property such as swales - draining channels, or depressed grading - to direct surface water to streets, storm sewers or areas of disposal. These must be maintained once properly established. All these precautions would be waived if;

- * you have changed the established slope that directs the surface water from your foundation;
- * Plantings improperly selected and placed in relation to the home; and by
- * poorly designed installation of sprinkler systems and watering.

Absolute maintenance requirements!

- * Check the slope of the soil to be sure it is away from the foundation. If it's not, contact your landscaper. You should check the slope frequently every year. Some settlement may occur due to the consolidation of earth that was placed against the foundation after its construction. Fill any depressions that occur! Watch for puddles after rains!
- * Some times its hard to tell if you have proper sloping under the decorative rocks or the mulched areas next to the foundation. It is worth the time and effort to check it out. Just because the home have not developed a problem yet it does not mean it will not.
- * Keep downspout extensions and/or splash blocks, if provided, in place!
- * Keep your house gutters and downspouts clean and in good repair! Overflows can be dangerous to the health of your home!

* Do not change the grade of the soil away from your foundation by building planters or raised beds!

* Be certain that all paving or patio slabs abutting your home, slope away from the foundation! Check seasonally, that they remain that way!

* Do not water your foundation! Sprinkle properly!

* Having a sump in the basement is great! however not having a pump defeats the purpose. In most cases if you do not have a pump you'll find standing water in it. For as little as they would cost it could potentially save you more in the future, and in some cases will reduce the amount of humidity in the basement. Additionally if the sump area encounters a lot of water I would recommend adding a warning device in case the pump fails, and in extreme cases it is recommended to add a standby battery in case of electrical failure.

In conclusion, I am attempting, to alert you to causes of potential problems that can arise from poor drainage, and the remedies to correct these problems. Please feel free to call me if you have any question.

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