

## **FOUNDATION INFORMATION**

Care of your new home's foundation is one of the most important considerations, both today and in the future. Especially in the North Texas area where expansion and contraction of the clay soil can cause stress and damage to any structure.

When your home was built, the amount of moisture under the foundation was evenly distributed to allow your house to raise and lower evenly and safely with changes in the water table. Remember ALL homes move, particularly in North Texas; our foundations are designed to "float" on top of unstable and shifting soils. The key is to maintain consistent moisture content at all points around and under the house foundation.

The problems associated with foundation moisture are like the two sides of a coin; watering during the dry season on the one side and drainage at all times on the other. Most people from this area have heard of watering around the foundation; soaker hoses, timers, drip irrigation, sprinkler systems with a special zone for the foundation area are all tools for controlling shrinkage of the soil at the perimeter of the foundation. The other side of the coin is however just as important, maybe even more important; drainage. Gutters with downspout extensions are a good investment to prevent rain runoff from washing depressions around the foundation, but the single biggest factor is the grade of the landscape in the area adjacent to the foundation. There are many factors that affect the drainage such as; flower beds, berms, pets, swimming pools and a myriad of other causes. The important thing is to remember all excess moisture needs to be directed away from the foundation. A quick check is to look around the house during or just after a moderate rain for standing water within 10 feet of the house. If water stands or runs next to the foundation, drainage corrections are needed. The good news is this is an easy, inexpensive, low tech repair. . The bad news is incorrect drainage can have devastating results to your foundation.

For the watering portion of foundation care, my recommendation is to water at least an 18 inch band around the foundation during dry weather year round. Do not allow water to be directed at the base of the foundation but rather water the soil and let the soil absorb the water and expand toward the foundation. If soaker hoses are used, place them about 12 inches from the foundation. If your home has flowerbeds next to the foundation, water to the outside edge of the bed. If the flowerbed has a curb, water should drain away from the foundation and not be allowed to stand.

Trees and shrubs absorb water, with roots often seeking higher concentration of moisture from under the foundation. Recommended planting distance from the foundation for trees and shrubs is equal to their potential height and spread. Improper drainage also causes foundation problems, and you should check where your lot drains before adding dirt

All foundations are equally good, whether standard slab, pier and beam, or post-tension slabs. But a large part of all potential problems can be eliminated by the homeowner's awareness and attention.