



THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN FOUNDATION REPAIR

How to Inspect A Home for Foundation Problems

EXTERNAL INDICATORS:

1. Cracks in the mortar and often through bricks. These usually appear in a stair-stepped manner (but may occur in any pattern), are most common at weak spots, like window openings, and usually are narrow at the bottom and widen as they go up.
2. Separations at windows and door frames. Check to see that the caulk line on both sides of windows and doors are even, and that the window or door frame is not separated from the header over the frame. This applies as well to garage doors. An un-equal separation (usually a small or no gap at the bottom of the frame that widens as it goes up) is a sign of possible foundation movement.
3. Chimneys and siding. Check around chimneys for cracks in the brick, separations at nearby windows, and repaired mortar joints. At areas where brick and siding meet, check the original paint line on the brick to see if the brick and siding are still aligned where they were when paint was applied.
4. Frieze board separations. The frieze boards are the trim pieces of wood closest to the brick around the top of the home. When newly constructed, these boards meet at all corners. When foundation settlement occurs, these boards are pushed apart at the corners by the movement of the bricks. Check to see if the brick is pushing these corners apart (they can separate from warping, where the bricks won't even be touching the wood) – even if they have been caulked.

INTERNAL INDICATORS:

1. Cracks in the sheetrock. These will most often happen around weak spots, like door and window openings as well as corners.
2. Door misalignments. The gap between the top of the door and the top of the frame should be relatively uniform, and the door should latch with the striker plate in the original position. Check to see if the strike plate has been moved, or if the top of the door has been cut to allow it to close. Also step back and look to see that the top of the door frame seems level with the ceiling – sometimes people will completely remove and reinstall a door out of level to make it work.
3. Floors that feel like they slope. Trust your instincts – if the floor feels out of level, it probably is. Use a 4' level to check, if desired.

NOTE: There is no such thing as a level house! Every house has highs and lows. Additionally, a few of the above listed indicators by themselves mean nothing. If, however, you have 2 or more in the same area of the home, there is a strong likelihood that foundation settlement has occurred. Also, many people go to great lengths to hide foundation settlement indicators, so these guidelines are no substitute for a professional inspection by a qualified and experienced expert.

Please call us with any questions or concerns you may have, or to schedule a thorough foundation inspection!