



Types of Piers: Concrete Pressed Pilings

If you listen to the hype, it sounds like there must be 20 or 30 different types of piers out there. Company A says they have an exclusive Super-Duper Pier that nobody else has, and they claim it's the only one that really works. Company B, however, has "invented" the Ultra Fantastic Pier that you can only get from them, and they claim that it is the strongest pier on the market. "All others pale in comparison", they say.

But in all honesty, there are really only 3 basic types of piers available and used by all companies:

Pressed Pilings, Drilled Piers, and Steel Piers.

The small variations found in each of the 3 main types make very little difference to the overall effectiveness of the pier. In this section, we will look at the Pressed Piling.

The Pressed Piling, the most used and most cost-effective pier on the market, consists of pre-made concrete cylinders which are pressed into the ground by hydraulic rams. The weight of the house is used to push against, and the piers are installed with about 3+ times the force they will experience when holding up the house. Often the cylinders will have a steel cable or steel rods in the center to help keep the cylinders in alignment both during and after installation, but this addition has not been proven to make a difference in pier alignment or long-term stability.

ADVANTAGES:

- * The most cost-effective system is also the fastest to install, which decreases mess and inconvenience.
- * The piers are adjustable by almost every company in the industry.
- * The piers are installed directly under the grade beam load. Nothing is required to transfer the load laterally.
- * In the unlikely event of pier failure, a new pier can be installed quickly next to the existing pier.

DISADVANTAGES:

- * By using the weight of the house to push against, new cracks can sometimes form during pier installation.
- * Many companies only push piers a minimum lift depth, which can allow the piers to settle in the future. Piers must be driven to complete refusal to ensure long-term stability.

Overall, Concrete Pressed Pilings are a very good foundation repair system if properly installed.