

Bullseye Bulletin

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Foundation Heaving vs. Settling



Foundation damage can cause major anxiety as a homebuyer or homeowner. Heaving and Settling are the two types of ground movement that causes damage to the homes foundation. Knowing the difference between the two can help you determine the proper corrective action. Please find below information on heaving and settling and warning signs for each.

Foundation Heave (Upward Movement)

Heaving occurs when the ground below expands upward and pushes the foundation with it. Common causes of foundation heaving include excessive moisture due to heavy rain, poor drainage and leaking pipes. Frost heave is when that excessive moisture freezes and expands upward. Clay soils act as sponges and is a highly expansive soil that is more susceptible to excessive liquid retention and freezing.

WARNING SIGNS - Slab slopes inward or toward the center, zigzag cracks in drywall, doors stick at the TOP of the door frame and water pooling around the homes foundation.

Foundation Settling (Downward Movement)

Settling occurs when the soil can no longer support the weight of the structure. This causes the foundation to drop, which unevenly stresses the structure of the home. Common causes of settlement are loose soil under the home that compresses over time, prolonged drought that causes clay soils to shrink under the foundation and erosion from heavy rain fall, leaking pipes and/or poor drainage.

WARNING SIGNS - Stair stepping cracks in brick or blocks, noticeable gaps around exterior doors and window frames, interior cracks in drywall and floors sloping in one direction.

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