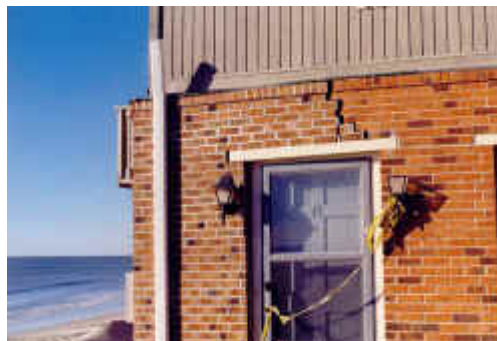


Identifying a Foundation Problem

Exterior indications of foundation problems

In dry periods, the soil adjacent to the foundation should be watered to maintain constant moisture. Proper watering is critical as the purpose is to keep the soil water content next to and under the foundation at approximately the same moisture content.

1. Doors that will not open or close properly
2. Gaps at the corner of fascia trim
3. Diagonal cracks in the wall at corners of doors and windows
4. Gaps between the garage door and the pavement at either side of the garage door
5. Windows that are hard to open and close
6. Cracks in the exposed grade beam of the house
7. Cracks in bricks and mortar



Cracks in brick

and mortar Interior indications of foundation problems

1. Un-level Floors
2. Large cracks in the concrete slab
3. Gaps above kitchen cabinets
4. Cabinet doors that will not stay shut
5. Diagonal cracks in the wall at corners of doors and windows
6. Curling and tearing of existing sheetrock repairs
7. Leaks and cracks in and around the fireplace

Exterior or interior indications of foundation problems could be caused by either settlement or upheaval. Settlement means a portion of the house foundation has dropped below the original foundation elevation. This occurs due to a loss of soil bearing capacity caused by compaction of fill, loss of moisture in the supporting soil, or due to the erosion of the supporting soil. In many cases, settlement originates and is more pronounced at the perimeter of the slab since the slab perimeter is the most susceptible to loss of moisture and differential moisture conditions.

Upheaval means the slab has risen above the original foundation elevation. This happens most often due to the introduction of moisture under the foundation. The most frequent cause of this moisture is a plumbing leak under the slab. The most common leak is on the drain side of the plumbing system.

Note that some damage is strictly "cosmetic" damage that does not interfere with the foundations load bearing capacity. These "cosmetic" items could be cracks in floor tiles, cracks in sheetrock, etc. A qualified foundation repair contractor or a structural engineer can help you determine if the problems you are faced with are cosmetic or will require foundation repair.