



Breen & Associates, LLC
Professional Home Inspection Services

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Springs Opportunity

By: Patrick Breen

With Spring right around the corner our minds begin to lean with great anticipation into what awaits us just around that proverbial bend. The list of outdoor activities that winter has created is extensive, but they usually involve the warmth of our long lost friend – the Sun. The arrival of our friend once again taking center stage is also accompanied by Spring rains and winter run-off.

We all love what this season brings, but this romance has an adversary, our homes foundation. It does not like being wet, and as a homeowner we do everything to keep them apart. But, it is also during this time of year that we have the perfect opportunity to observe how these two might secretly meet.

Foundations and footings come in many forms but one thing they all have in common is the purposeful avoidance of too much water. This excess moisture can compromise the structures stability, allow penetration into your home causing deterioration and even cause flooding.

Oftentimes moisture penetration goes unnoticed until damage is already done. Everything about our home structure is designed to shed water away, but if a weakness develops in any of its systems the results will most often cause damage. You might just begin to see cracks starting to form in your foundation or mold and rot developing in crawlspaces and basements.

It is during early spring that a keen eye can spot a potential problem in your drainage system. Two factors that can help us are: no vegetation and a frozen ground. When the Spring waters begin to flow, and the earth surrounding your home is still hard from winters frost, moisture is unable to percolate and is forced to travel the path of least resistance along the surface.

With little or no vegetation to hide the nuances of your surrounding landscape you have the perfect opportunity to watch where the water wants to travel. If its path is any low area next to the structure you have a potential problem; but now you also possess the knowledge of how to avoid possible damage.

Low areas next to the structure that pool water should be filled with dirt, and if you have a relatively flat landscape allowing water to sit stagnant you might consider digging a French drain that channels moisture out into the yard and away from the structure.

If you live in a relatively new home you might assume all your landscaping needs have been met, but in fact new construction can also be problematic. Sometimes it takes several years or more for the loose dirt around a new home to fully settle and compact. During that time it is common for low areas directly next to the foundation to form.

So, this Spring while out in your yard enjoying the Sun's long awaited arrival, take a good look around at just where all that water might be going, and then take measures to head it off before it and your foundation ever have a chance to meet.