

BASEMENT WATER SEEPAGE FACT SHEET

FACT: Basement water seepage problems are *private property issues* that can cause a homeowner much time, money and frustration.

The **cause** of basement water seepage problems can be one particular item or the combination of many. Problems are related to:

- foundation age and type
- construction methods used in original construction
- slope of the yard
- recent weather trends
- soil types
- region topography before development

Try to identify the **source** of the water and the **route** the water takes into the basement. It is easy to see what's going on in an unfinished basement. If seepage occurs in a finished section of a basement, the decision gets more complicated. You could remove finished walls etc. to see the wall, or you could explore other solutions or wait and see what happens in the future. Sometimes that decision can be a difficult one.

Keep the following items in mind when dealing with basement water seepage problems:

- **Grading** around the house. The ground around the foundation should be sloped away as much as possible. Never trap water against the foundation as this can make problems worse.
- **Gutters.** Make sure gutters are not clogged and are working properly. Large roofs may require oversized gutters. During a rain, check the valley where two rooflines come together, as water flow down this valley can sometimes jump the gutters.
- **Downspouts.** Make sure downspouts outlet as far away from the house as possible (but no closer than 10' to the property line). Buried downspouts should be checked for blockages. (Try running a hose down this pipe during periods of dry weather to determine if there is a break in the line which seeps back into the basement)
- **Wall cracks.** Make sure wall cracks are sealed using a hydraulic cement or similar waterproofing material.
- **Utility lines.** Look where utility service lines (water, sewer, gas) come through the wall. Sometimes this area is not sealed properly.
- **Sump pump.** If you have one, make sure it is functioning properly. If you don't have a sump pump and experience seepage at the floor level, you may want to consider installing one along with an underdrain system
- If your **electricity goes out** frequently or if you want extra protection from seepage, you may want to consider a battery backup for the sump pump.
- **Stair well drains.** Make sure the stairwell drain functions properly and is clear from debris. Try a dry weather test by running a hose down this pipe for a length of time to determine if it flows freely. Remember, problems with this drain can lead to water seeping under the basement door.
- **Please remember** it is a plumbing code violation to pipe any stormwater system into the sanitary sewer system.