

FOUNDATION MAINTENANCE

Proper foundation maintenance will minimize differential soil movement. Because of heavy rains at certain times of the year, it is impossible to keep moisture away from the foundation. However, good drainage will control excessive moisture, and this is very important. Excessive drying of the soil can be prevented by controlled watering around the foundation during dry seasons. Trees and other large vegetation accelerate the drying process, and careful consideration should be given when planting. Proper landscaping and ground cover will help prevent drying. Some recommended steps for foundation maintenance and care are listed below:

- * Maintain positive drainage away from the foundation with a suggested slope of four inches in the first six feet away from the foundation.
- * Fill any depressions adjacent to or near the foundation with native soil. Do not use sand or other granular materials.
- * Check gutters and down spouts to be sure that water is discharged away from the foundation area.
- * Water liberally around the foundation during dry spells. This should be done in a uniform manner around the entire house to prevent uneven soil movement. This will include the areas of the yard where there is not grass or plants. Automatic lawn sprinkling or automatic foundation soaker hose systems may be installed and are very beneficial.
- * Plant trees a distance away from the foundation equal to their anticipated height. If existing trees are near the foundation, they will draw added water from the foundation, thus requiring more water within this area. Sometimes tree roots that go under the foundation will need to be cut and a barrier trench installed to prevent new roots from growing under the foundation.
- * Cracks in the soil from drying should not be allowed to form. If they do, gradual watering should be applied adjacent to the cracks so that they will close. Water should not be placed directly into the open cracks.

The object of a proper maintenance program is to attain as constant a moisture content as is possible for the soil under the foundation and the perimeter of the house. Special emphasis must be made in watering programs during dry seasons and the effect that trees have in the removal of soil moisture during these dry seasons.