Drainage Protects Homes

How Better Water Control Around a Property Helps Limit Damage



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Rainwater may seem harmless, but where it flows can shape the condition of a home for years. When water is directed away from a house, it helps protect the foundation, siding, soil and landscaping that support daily living.

That is why drainage matters to both longtime homeowners and people preparing to buy. Good grading, working gutters and well-planned downspouts can help limit moisture problems before they become expensive repairs.

Good drainage starts with the ground around the house. The Federal Emergency Management Agency advises property owners to keep soil sloping away from the foundation so water does not collect near basement walls or crawl spaces.

When water pools near a home, it can seep into small cracks and add pressure against the foundation. Over time, that moisture can contribute to leaks, damp basements and shifting soil.

Gutters and downspouts also do an important job. The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety says gutters should be kept clear so rainwater can move freely rather than spill over along the roof edge and next to the house.

Overflow can do more than leave muddy spots in the yard. It can stain siding, wear away mulch and wash out flower beds placed near entryways and front walks.

A well-placed downspout extension can make a difference.

By carrying roof runoff farther from the structure, extensions help reduce the amount of water that settles near the base of the home. Splash blocks can also help guide water and reduce erosion in planting areas.

Drainage needs can vary from lot to lot. A flatter property may need swales or shallow drainage paths to guide water, while a home at the bottom of a slope may need added attention during heavy storms.

SEASONAL UPKEEP

Maintenance is often simple, but it matters. Gutters filled with leaves and debris can back up quickly, especially during spring downpours and fall storms.

Homeowners can also watch for warning signs after rain. Standing water, bare patches in the lawn, damp basement walls and soil washed away from planting beds may point to a drainage problem that needs attention.

For buyers, drainage is worth a careful look during a showing or inspection period. Puddles near the foundation, downspouts that end too close to the house and negative grading can all suggest future maintenance needs.

PROTECTING THE PROPERTY

Good drainage also supports the appearance and usefulness of outdoor spaces. Patios, walkways, driveways and garden beds tend to last longer when water is moved away instead of allowed to collect and slowly wear materials down.

In many neighborhoods, drainage planning is simply part of responsible home care. It helps preserve the home, supports curb appeal and gives owners much more confidence during rainy weather.

Paying attention to water flow is a practical step with lasting value. A home that sheds water well is better prepared for the seasons and better positioned to avoid preventable damage.



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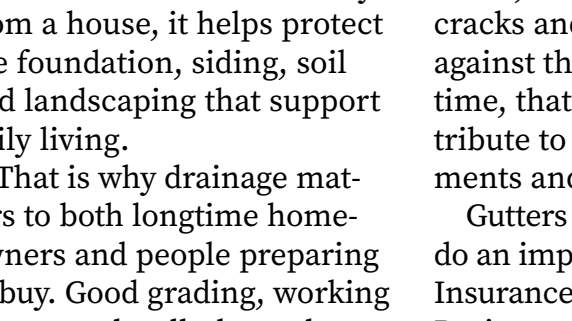
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REAL ESTATE 101



Check After Rain

Walk your property after a storm. You will quickly see where water collects, where soil is washing out and whether downspouts are sending runoff too close to the house.

HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Grading: Grading is the shaping and slope of soil around a home. Proper grading directs water away from the foundation, helping reduce pooling, erosion and moisture problems near the structure.

AD SPACE