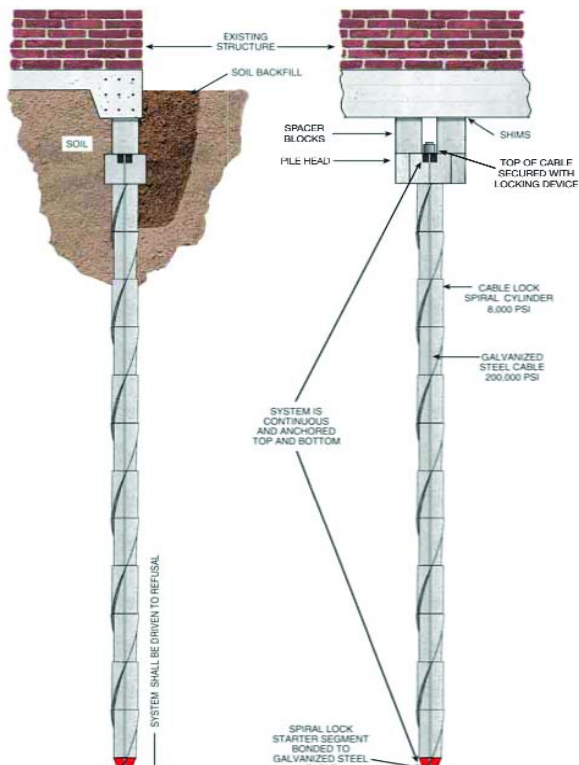




# BUILDING TRUST:

## FIENDS OR FRIENDS IN FOUNDATION REPAIR

### Cable Lock™ Plus Piling Diagram



ABOVE: AAA Foundation Repair cable lock systems offer homeowners a tensile strength of 200,000 psi versus 40,000 psi rebar used in other systems.

TOP OF PAGE: Cable lock spiral cylinder installation with AAA Foundation Repair combines the advantage of bell-bottom pier technology with the convenience of pre-cast piling technique to provide ultimate support and rigidity.

### PROTECTION AND REPAIR TIPS AROUND, BUT WHO CAN YOU TRUST YOUR FOUNDATION TO?

BY SARAH JUNEK

You look up and see it, a tiny crack above the door jam. Its 2-foot long hairline path slices through, chipping the paint and curving suddenly off to one side. Smiling back at you, the fracture says one thing — you have a foundation problem.

In Dallas and Fort Worth, soupy soil is inescapable thanks to volatile weather conditions. Slabs sink and float as the soil's water level expands and contracts, but foundation issues often go unnoticed until it's too late. Proper care of your foundation is one thing. Trusting the repairer is another.

#### YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

When doors and windows begin to stick and cracks appear in both sheet rock and brick mortar, you might have a foundation problem, according to the Foundation Repair Network. A structural engineer can help you determine which cracks are merely "cosmetic damage" and which indicate structural damage.

Drought, nearby tree roots, plumbing leaks, clay soil and inadequate drainage can all be factors that lead to foundation damage. The most common cause of foundation failure is differential movement, the shifting of soil beneath the foundation. The compacting clay soils of North Texas do a great job contributing to this, causing the total volume of soil to rise and fall as moisture comes and goes. The plasticity index, says Dan Jagers with AAA Foundation Repair for more than 35 years, is an important thing homeowners should evaluate because "Dallas/Fort Worth soils have an average of 60 inches when what you want is something between 10 and 20 inches." Jagers says not knowing the soil's expansive and contracting nature is the worst situation in which homeowners can find themselves.



## Tips for Protecting Foundation

Dan Jagers with AAA Foundation Repair and Travis Nech of Metro Leveling suggest following these tips to protect your home's foundation:

- Keep gutters clean so rainwater doesn't pile up near the foundation.
- Landscape for good low-spot drainage around your home.
- Check that sprinkler heads aren't pointed toward the exterior walls.
- Keep air conditioner condensation drainage away.
- Make sure downspouts to gutters are far enough away from the house.

### CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR

Advice regarding the solution you need often is as numerous as the companies that provide the services. Customers with Brown Foundation Repair often are confused when facing a number of different solutions to their problem. "If you ask five different companies for an opinion, you are likely to get five different answers," says a representative with the company.

For example, heaving, where the foundation is raised in areas due to over saturation, is not a situation that warrants pier installation, says Travis Nech of Metro Leveling. "There are many reasons for foundation movement, not all of which can be resolved by installing a bunch of piers," he says.

Nech says 60 percent of his calls this year have been from people who were unhappy with other foundation repair companies and had lost money. One customer had spent about \$10,000 on a concrete piling system to keep his foundation from sinking. However, says Nech, "once it's pressed in, it will actually lift up the whole slab. If it does that, the foundation is floating around."

The moral of the story is: Before you choose a foundation repair company, ask for client references and referrals.

### MATERIALS FOR REPAIR

Materials used for foundation repair abound. Some materials can be installed without invading the building; others require a cut through the foundation where the problem occurs. Piers often are necessary when the soil is especially soupy says Jagers. They allow you to install support down to a zone where the moisture level does not change and therefore the soil does not shift. That can take between 8 feet and 30 feet of either concrete piers, pressed concrete pilings, steel pushed pilings or steel helical pilings.

One of the least expensive processes is called mudjacking, which employs a low-pressure hydraulic process wherein a soil-cement grout is pumped into a series of 2-inch diameter holes below the foundation, filling whatever gaps may have caused cracks and put stress on the foundation. It is the quickest and easiest way to return sunken concrete to its intended level. However, every situation is different and requires a custom evaluation and repair plan.

### PROTECTION FOR FOUNDATION

Oftentimes homeowners can prevent foundation problems with the proper care and attention to the soil condition around the slab. "The main plan of protection is to educate yourself," Nech says. An online information sheet with helpful tips on maintenance is available at [www.foundationrepair.org](http://www.foundationrepair.org).

Most foundation damage is done during the dry, hot summer months when the soil retracts and foundations tend to sink with the shifting soil. Soaker hoses are the best way to prevent excessive drying out around your foundation. Place the hoses 18 inches to 24 inches away and only get the soil moist, says Nech.

Also, consider the soil when choosing a spot to build a new home. "You should have a soil survey done," says Jagers, to determine whether it's desiccated soil or not when building. "In an ideal world," he adds, "if you prepare the pad, you head off the potential for problems."



ABOVE:

*Cracks in both sheet rock and brick mortar indicate a foundation problem.*

ABOVE:

*When damage is done to your home, your most prized possession, the questions of what to do are endless.*

## RESOURCES

### AAA FOUNDATION REPAIR

Home Foundation Repair Service  
1617 Bluebank, Dallas, TX  
214.398.9656  
[www.aaafoundation.com](http://www.aaafoundation.com)

### ACCURATE LEAK AND LINE

439 North Gone Belle Ln.  
Maybank, TX  
972.216.5325  
[www accurateteak.com](http://www accurateteak.com)

### ADVANCED FOUNDATION REPAIR

800.405.8880  
[www.foundationrepairs.com](http://www.foundationrepairs.com)

### BROWN FOUNDATION REPAIR

972.271.2621  
[www.brownfoundationrepair.com](http://www.brownfoundationrepair.com)

### LONGHORN FOUNDATION REPAIR INC.

10660 Plano Road, Ste. 128  
Dallas, TX  
214.340.3700

### METRO LEVELING FOUNDATION REPAIR

972.999.1507  
[www.metrofoundationrepair.com](http://www.metrofoundationrepair.com)

### OLSHAN FOUNDATION REPAIR

11217 Sherman Ave.  
Dallas, TX  
972.238.1600  
[www.olshanfoundation.com](http://www.olshanfoundation.com)

### PERMA-PIER FOUNDATION REPAIR COMPANY

214.637.1444  
[www.permapier.com](http://www.permapier.com)

### PLATINUM ROOFING & REMODELING

404 E. McKinney Pkwy. #D  
McKinney, TX  
817.689.2413  
[www.newmetalroof.com](http://www.newmetalroof.com)