

VORTEX TECHNOLOGIES, INC.  
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HYDROSTATIC TESTING - UNDER SLAB SANITARY PIPING

IF YOU'RE READING THE INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE, YOU MAY BE TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO PERFORM HYDROSTATIC TESTING ON THE SANITARY PIPING BENEATH A RESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION. MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN TOLD THAT UNDER SLAB PLUMBING LEAKS ARE CAUSING FOUNDATION DAMAGE, OR MAYBE THE FOUNDATION HAS ALREADY BEEN LEVELED POSSIBLY RESULTING IN BROKEN PIPES. OR MAYBE THE HOME HAS CAST-IRON PIPES UNDER THE SLAB, WHICH CAN DETERIORATE OVER TIME. PERHAPS YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT PURCHASING A HOME AND DON'T WANT TO BE STUCK WITH COSTLY REPAIRS SHOULD YOU LATER FIND OUT THAT THE UNDER SLAB PLUMBING IS LEAKING. ALL OF THESE ARE REASONS TO PERFORM HYDROSTATIC TESTING.

WHETHER YOU'RE A BUYER OR A SELLER, THE RESULTS OF THE TEST WILL POSE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS REGARDING A COURSE OF ACTION. IF THE PLUMBING DOES NOT LEAK NOW, WHAT ARE THE ODDS IT COULD LEAK IN THE FUTURE? IF IT DOES LEAK, SHOULD IT BE FIXED AND WHAT ARE THE REPAIR OPTIONS AND COSTS? DOES THE LEAK (S) ALLOW DRAINAGE TO ESCAPE INTO THE SURROUNDING SOILS UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS OR ONLY DURING TESTING? NOW THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF A LEAK OR LEAKS, YOU MUST DISCLOSE IT TO POTENTIAL BUYERS WHEN YOU SELL YOUR HOME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE REPAIRED OR WHETHER THE LEAKS ALLOW DRAINAGE TO ESCAPE THE PIPING UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS.

NOW YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING ABOUT THE COST OF HYDROSTATIC TESTING. IF A CLEANOUT IS ALREADY IN PLACE TO ALLOW INSERTION OF CAMERAS AND TEST BALLS, THE COST OF AN OVERALL HYDROSTATIC TEST IS ABOUT \$300.00. THIS WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE SYSTEM IS LEAKING WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY DETERMINING THE LOCATION OF THE LEAK OR LEAKS. FURTHER TESTING TO PINPOINT THE LOCATION OF LEAKS WILL ADD TO THE COST. FLOW TESTING TO DETERMINE IF THE LEAKS ALLOW DRAINAGE TO ESCAPE THE PIPING DURING NORMAL USE WILL ALSO INCREASE THE COST. TESTING ON HOMES BUILT IN THE 1960s AND BEFORE OFTEN COSTS MORE DUE TO THE LACK OF CLEANOUTS AND THE PRESENCE OF MULTIPLE EXITS.

SO WHAT KIND OF TIME COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED FOR HYDROSTATIC TESTING? AGAIN, THIS VARIES BASED ON THE PRESENCE OF EXISTING CLEANOUTS, THE NUMBER OF SANITARY UNITS, AND THE NUMBER OF OTHER TESTING SERVICES REQUESTED. MANY TESTS CAN BE COMPLETED IN AN HOUR IF A CLEANOUT IS PRESENT AND THERE IS A FIRST FLOOR SHOWER TO MONITOR THE WATER LEVEL. IF THE CLEANOUT HAS TO BE LOCATED OR A TOILET MUST BE PULLED TO MONITOR THE WATER LEVEL, THE PROCESS CAN TAKE TWO OR THREE HOURS. IF A CLEANOUT MUST BE INSTALLED, OR THE SANITARY PIPING EXITS FROM BENEATH THE FOUNDATION IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, THE PROCESS CAN TAKE ALL DAY. AS A GENERAL RULE, THE TIME REQUIRED TO TEST A HOME BUILT SINCE THE EARLY SEVENTIES WILL BE LESS THAN A HOME BUILT IN THE SIXTIES OR BEFORE. THIS IS INDEPENDENT OF THE SIZE OF

THE HOUSE OR NUMBER OF BATHROOMS. INSTEAD, IT IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF EXITS (INDEPENDENT SANITARY SYSTEMS) AND WHETHER OR NOT CLEANOUTS ARE PRESENT. HOMES BUILT USING PLASTIC SANITARY PIPING (HOMES BUILT SINCE THE EARLY SEVENTIES) ALMOST ALWAYS HAVE CLEANOUTS AND EXIT FROM BENEATH THE FOUNDATION IN ONE LOCATION. HOMES BUILT IN THE SIXTIES AND PRIOR (USING CAST- IRON SANITARY PIPING) OFTEN HAVE MULTIPLE LOCATIONS WHERE THE PIPING EXITS FROM BENEATH THE SLAB AND OFTEN DO NOT HAVE CLEANOUTS ON ALL OF THE SYSTEMS.

THE CREW WILL BEGIN BY LOCATING A CLEANOUT OR INSTALLING ONE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM. THEY WILL THEN USE A STATE-OF-THE- ART SEWER CAMERA TO DETERMINE THE OVERALL CONDITION AND LAYOUT OF THE PIPING. A TEST BALL WILL BE INFLATED IN THE BUILDING DRAIN BENEATH THE PERIMETER OF THE FOUNDATION, AND THE PIPES WILL BE FILLED WITH WATER. THE WATER LEVEL IS THEN MONITORED AT A SHOWER DRAIN OR CLOSET FLANGE AFTER REMOVING A COMMUNE. A FALLING WATER LEVEL WILL INDICATE A TESTING LEAK ON THE SANITARY SYSTEM BELOW THE SLAB. ADDITIONAL TESTING WILL BE NECESSARY TO PINPOINT THE LEAK (S) FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTIMATING REPAIR COSTS.

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