

The Truth About Basement Waterproofing

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The majority of waterproofing today is being performed by system companies. System companies may claim to offer different methods, but will always steer you to their method, which is usually an interior water control system. This one size fits all approach to basement waterproofing benefits the waterproofing company more often than the customer. I can think of no other industry that so predominantly utilizes a system approach as opposed to a problem solving approach.

There remains basically two options available to solve wet basement problems. Interior or exterior. Interior work utilizes drainage inside your basement to control the water that is entering and directs it to a sump pump. This method should never be called waterproofing, it should be referred to as water control. Water control systems allow the water in, in order to pump it back out. Waterproofing is accomplished only by exterior excavation to the bottom of the foundation, installing proper drainage and treating the walls to prevent the water from entering. Let it in and pump it out, or keep it out all together. This is the main difference between waterproofing vs. water control.

Which method is best for your foundation? The overwhelming consensus among professionals outside of the industry, structural engineers, local building department officials, etc. is waterproofing is always the best choice. So why do so many companies in this industry propose water control approaches? The answer is because it is all they do. Water control systems are relatively easy to install. It requires very little in the way of equipment or material. It is fast, and requires minimal labor skills. Very few industries derive a profit margin of 70% on work, yet water control companies routinely achieve this figure.

When evaluating your specific situation, take a problem solving approach as opposed to a system approach. An honest foundation expert will examine your basement or crawl space to determine the cause of your problem, in order to offer a solution, specific to your needs. A system company salesman is ultimately unconcerned with the cause of your problem because the solution he will present, is the same for everyone. You must be aware that a growing number of water control companies are beginning to propose some outside work, such as shallow outside drainage systems, or exploration trenches. This outside work benefits the customer very little and allows the system company to appear different, and drive up their price. Excavation outside is only effective if you dig to the bottom of the foundation.

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Remember a company's size has absolutely no relation to how reliable or competent the company is.

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