



## *Home*

### **INSPECT YOUR CRAWLSPACE TO HEAD OFF COSTLY REPAIRS**

Although it's the least glamorous part of your home, your crawlspace can act as an "early warning system" to alert you to problems before they become serious and costly to repair. Loss-prevention experts recommend you inspect your crawlspace once a year to look for these Big 5 Tip-offs to Trouble:

- 1) **Cracks in the foundation or structural issues.** Vertical cracks smaller than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch usually aren't structurally significant. However, if you see horizontal cracks, marked separation, or a part of the foundation that looks sunken, it's time to call a foundation specialist.
- 2) **Leaking foundations.** Improperly sloped grading around your house, a high water table, wayward downspouts, or a concrete patio that has shifted over time (and now slopes toward the house) all can contribute to a wet crawlspace and the mold, mildew, insect, and rot problems that can follow.
- 3) **Leaky pipes.** Look for damaged flooring under bathroom, laundry, and kitchen areas (you may want to gently pull back the insulation for a better look). Another sneaky leaker: the main drain pipe where it penetrates the foundation wall.
- 4) **Floor framing, support, and subfloor issues.** If doors in your home don't shut properly or floors seem to slope, rot or shifted supports may be to blame.
- 5) **Vermin.** Destructive ants, termites, powder post beetles, and even rats can live undetected in the crawlspace for years.

If you find a potential problem or just feel unsure about what you're looking at, visit the American Society of Home Inspectors online ([ashi.org](http://ashi.org)) for referrals to an inspector in your area.

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