



DO YOU HAVE A  
**WET, NASTY & SMELLY**  
CRAWL SPACE PROBLEM?

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IF IT'S IN YOUR CRAWLSPACE, IT'S IN YOUR HOME!



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# The Purpose of a Crawl Space

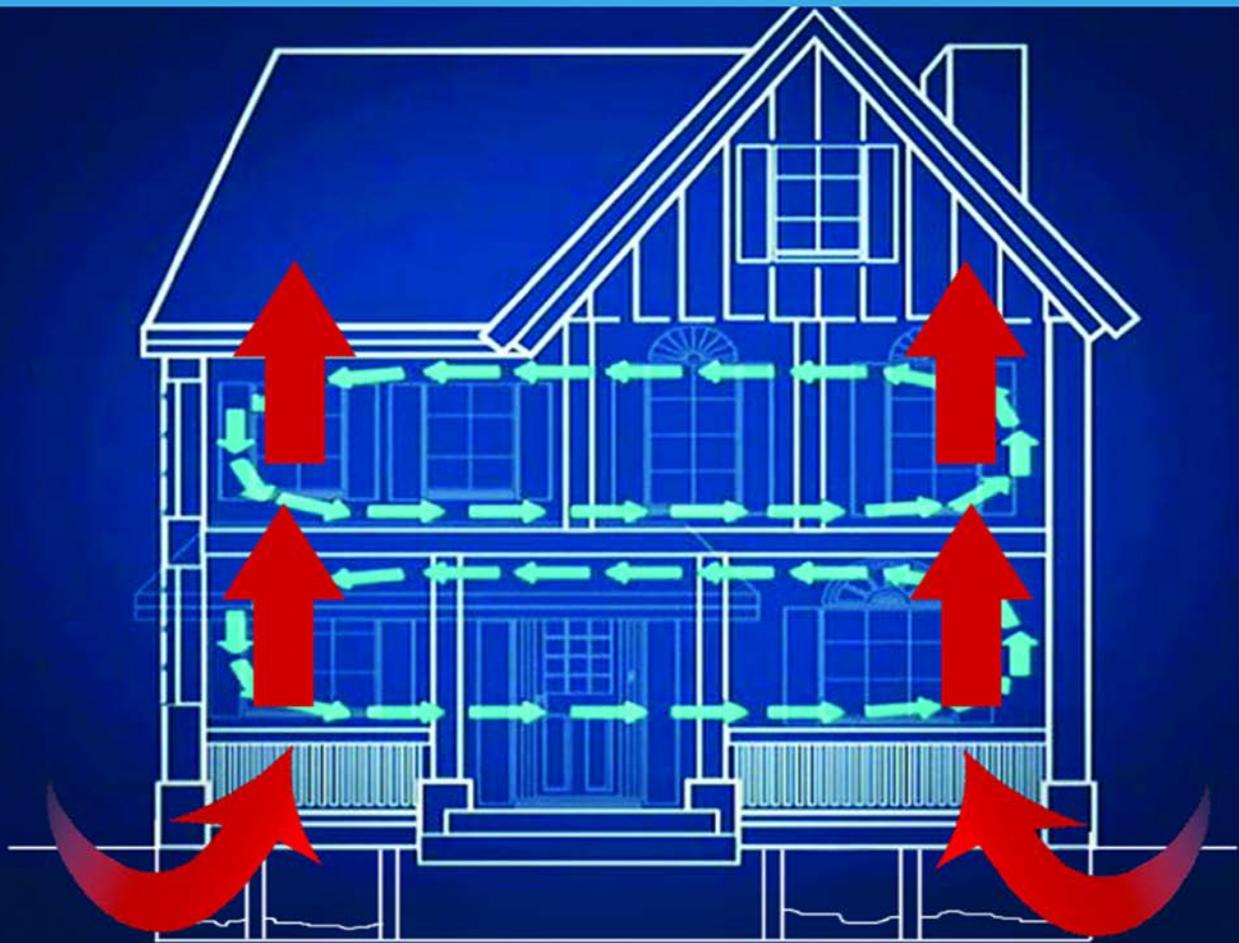
Many homes feature a crawl space. This is an area with limited height under the floor of a home that allows for cooling air to circulate throughout the home.



Crawl spaces are useful in helping homeowners access wiring, plumbing, duct work and can be used for limited storage.



## What is the Stack Effect?



YOU  
BREATHE  
CRAWL SPACE  
AIR –  
LIKE IT OR NOT

The stack effect is a technical term to define the rise and escape motions of air throughout a home. Also known as the chimney effect, this action involves air entering the house through the lowest level and, as it rises, having its temperature altered according to the environmental patterns of the upper levels. Those patterns involve any hollow spaces in the structure that might invite air leaks.

## Why is a basic understanding of the stack effect important to you?

First, realize that the rising air isn't purely alone. It's unwittingly transporting many unwelcome elements that typically inhabit exposed crawl spaces and basements.

Humidity, mold spores, and the excremental waste of dust mites are examples of these unseen hitchhikers. Their presence in your living space can ruin your quality of life.



Your family's health is being jeopardized by potentially serious allergies or respiratory ailments.

The underlying culprit in this entire circumstance is excess moisture. Due to its vulnerabilities, the crawl space is ushered into a state of dampness which further rolls out the welcome mat for wood rot, termites and carpenter ants. This scenario is handily avoidable.

# Warning Signs of an Unhealthy Crawl Space

Crawl space problems can be harmful to your home and to your health. The first step is becoming aware of the problem caused by an unhealthy crawl space and the solutions available.

You might have an unhealthy crawl space if one or more of these signs is present.

# 1.

The first sign of problems for homeowners that don't visually inspect their crawl space is often a foul smell. When moisture enters the space and can't escape through crawl space vents, mold and mildew start to grow in the wood and on the foundation. Even small amounts of fungus will cause your crawl space to smell, and the odor will rise into your home before long. A crawl space dehumidifier can help reduce the odor, but it won't fix the problem.



If you do enter your crawl space and see mold, it is a sure sign something is wrong with the crawl space encapsulation. This could be a damaged crawl space vapor barrier or crawl space vents that are blocked or closed. Water seeping through the foundation is also a cause of mold, mildew and the musty odors they produce.

# 2.



# 3.

If a visual inspection of your crawl space shows water on the walls or floor, then moisture condensing on a cold surface might be the issue. Moisture from inside your home will condense on the cold foundation walls if crawl space insulation is inadequate. In summer, cold water pipes that are not insulated will condense water and will drip onto the floor.



If there is puddling or flooding in your crawl space, then water is probably getting in through a crack, faulty window well or leaking from a pipe. Tracing the source of the water should be easy because it often leaves staining where it has run down a wall or out of a crack.

# 4.



# 5.

Sagging or warping floors are serious signs of crawl space problems, and it's likely they've persisted for years. What's happening is that your floor joists are deteriorating or moisture is warping the subfloor. There are many causes of floor joist damage including rotting wood from excess moisture and damage from termites and carpenter ants that are attracted to the moisture.



# Common Causes of Crawl Space Moisture



## 1. Cracks in Foundation Walls and Floors

Moisture can seep through even the smallest of cracks in your home's foundation to produce flooding or minor water issues. Cracks need to be addressed by filling them and then making sure you have effective crawl space encapsulation. This can be achieved with a vapor barrier that is in good condition and properly sealed. The barrier should be replaced if it is no longer preventing the entrance of moisture.



## 2. Improper Crawl Space Venting

Normal household humidity and moisture will build up in the crawl space if the area is not vented. Crawl space vents in good working condition allow for moisture to escape as air circulates through the space. If you have crawl space vents, but they're not sufficient to remove moisture and get rid of the musty odor, consider adding additional vents. Another option is using a crawl space dehumidifier to assist in the process. Depending on the method of crawl space encapsulation used, it might be possible to eliminate the need for crawl space vents because the encapsulation will prevent the intrusion of moisture.

# Common Causes of Crawl Space Moisture



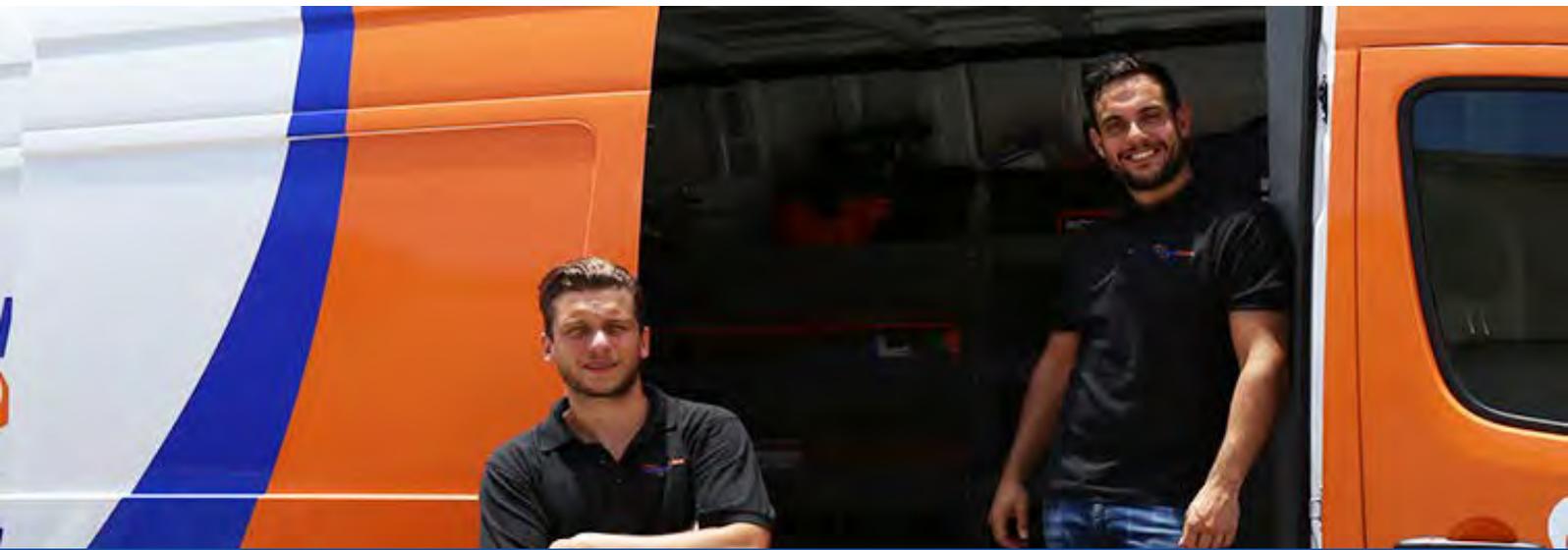
## 3. A Lack of Crawl Space Insulation

Insulation is an important part of comprehensive crawl space encapsulation. Poorly insulated crawl spaces become very cold when temperatures drop. When that happens, moisture collects on the cold walls and creates crawl space problems. The solution is to add crawl space insulation to prevent the walls from becoming cold enough to condense water. When combined with a functioning crawl space vapor barrier, insulation is very effective against moisture buildup, mold and the musty odors it causes.



## 4. Water Against the Foundation

There are several reasons for water against the foundation. First, the landscape might be graded improperly with the result that rainwater flows towards the foundation, not away from it. A lack of rain gutters, gutters that are damaged or full of leaves and debris will cause water to fall against the foundation. A leaking sewer line or broken water lines are among the other possible causes of a wet foundation. It is important that these problems be solved before a crawl space vapor barrier, vents and insulation will do its job. Until the repairs are made, a crawl space dehumidifier can reduce the damage caused by the moisture.



# WHEN IT'S TIME TO CALL A PROFESSIONAL

The bottom line is that an unhealthy, unattended crawl space must be repaired to protect both the investment made in a home as well as the health of the residents themselves. Considering a crawl space vapor barrier or an encapsulation system can be a wise step in preventing major problems down the road.



**Schedule a FREE Crawl Space Assessment to see how the Crawl Space Encapsulation Specialists at AdvantaClean can help.**

**SCHEDULE NOW!**



There are solutions to every crawl space issue. Inspect your crawl space today, or call a professional with experience in identifying problems and providing solutions.

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