

DFW FOUNDATION REPAIR · REALTOR CHECKLIST

Foundation Repair Field Checklist

For DFW Realtors · Listing, Option Period & Closing Reference

Use this checklist from pre-listing through closing to catch foundation issues early, document required disclosures, and protect the transaction. DFW's expansive clay soils make foundation movement one of the region's most common deal-breakers — early, documented action keeps closings on track.

1 · Pre-Listing Foundation Inspection

- ☐ Walk the exterior and note any visible cracks in brick, mortar, or siding (document location, width, and direction).
- ☐ Check all four corners of the slab for separation, dropping, or heaving.
- ☐ Inspect interior walls for cracks above doors/windows and at wall-ceiling joints.
- ☐ Test doors and windows for sticking, dragging, or failing to latch properly.
- ☐ Look for uneven or sloping floors using a marble or level on multiple rooms.
- ☐ Inspect tile floors for cracking, especially at doorways and transitions.
- ☐ Check garage floor and approach for separation from the slab.
- ☐ Note any prior pier-and-beam or slab repair evidence (existing piers, brackets, mudjacking ports).
- ☐ Photograph every finding with a measuring tape or coin for scale in the frame.

2 · DFW Soil & Site Risk Factors

- ☐ Identify the lot's soil type — DFW's expansive Houston Black clay/Yazden clay is high-risk for movement.
- ☐ Confirm whether the lot is on fill, slope, or near a retention pond/drainage path.
- ☐ Check for trees and large shrubs within 1.5× mature canopy distance of the foundation (root intrusion).
- ☐ Verify grade slopes away from the slab on all sides (minimum 6" drop over 10').
- ☐ Inspect foundation perimeter for plumbing leaks, soaker-hose runoff, or pooling water.
- ☐ Note prior drought or flood events on the property disclosure history.

3 · When to Call a Foundation Specialist

- ☐ Cracks wider than 1/4 inch, or any V-shaped / stairstep / diagonal crack pattern.
- ☐ Visible slab displacement at corners or in the garage.
- ☐ Multiple doors/windows out of alignment across more than one room.
- ☐ Buyer or buyer's inspector flags movement during option period.
- ☐ Seller disclosure reveals prior undisclosed or partially completed repairs.
- ☐ Property is 15+ years old with no documented prior foundation work.
- ☐ Insurance claim or HOA complaint references foundation distress.

4 · Required Documentation Before Closing

- ☐ Obtain a written, sealed engineering report from a licensed Texas P.E. (not a contractor proposal).
- ☐ Confirm the engineer specifies repair method: drilled pier, helical pier, pressed pile, foam, or drainage correction.
- ☐ Collect permits and final inspection records from the city (most DFW cities require a foundation permit).
- ☐ Get a Plumbing Leak Test (hydrostatic or camera) before AND after repair — DFW lenders often require it.
- ☐ Secure the contractor's transferable lifetime warranty (verify transfer terms and any fees).
- ☐ Provide an itemized invoice marked "Paid in Full" with warranty registration number.
- ☐ Add the foundation inspection report and warranty to the Seller's Disclosure Notice (TREC OP-H).

5 · Buyer / Option Period Guidance

- ☐ Recommend a foundation-specific inspection (not a general home inspector) during the option period.
- ☐ Request the prior 2–3 years of foundation inspection reports and warranty documents from the seller.
- ☐ Negotiate price reduction, repair concession, or repair-and-close escrow if movement is found.
- ☐ Confirm a post-repair elevation survey (zippy elevation certificate) is included in the deliverables.
- ☐ Verify the warranty transfers to the buyer with no re-inspection fee or geographic limitation.

6 · Post-Repair Verification

- ☐ Walk the property with the contractor and engineer to confirm scope completion.
- ☐ Re-test interior doors/windows for alignment improvement.
- ☐ Confirm exterior grading, drainage, and downspout extensions are corrected to the engineer's spec.
- ☐ Photograph completed piers, brackets, and any plumbing repairs for the file.
- ☐ Provide the buyer a one-page Foundation Care Guide (watering, drainage, planting distance).

7 · Long-Term Maintenance Checklist for New Owners

- ☐ Maintain consistent soil moisture — install a foundation watering system or soaker hose 6–12" from the slab.
- ☐ Avoid over-watering; cycles of flood/drought accelerate movement on DFW clay.
- ☐ Keep root barriers between trees and the foundation; remove trees within the 1.5× canopy rule.
- ☐ Re-grade any settling soil within 12 months and after every heavy storm season.
- ☐ Schedule a foundation elevation check every 2–3 years or after any plumbing leak.
- ☐ Keep the warranty document and transfer paperwork in a permanent property file.

Disclaimer

This checklist is a practical field reference, not legal or engineering advice. All foundation evaluations, repairs, and disclosures should be performed or verified by a licensed Texas professional engineer (P.E.) and a registered foundation repair contractor. TREC disclosure obligations and city permit requirements vary by jurisdiction — confirm with the local building department and your broker before relying on any item here.