



Water Shedding Systems

The single most important aspect of a home and perhaps the most often overlooked and misunderstood would be its Water Shedding system's capabilities and components. The Water Shed begins from the top ridges of the roof, down the roofs and valleys, around all roof penetration flashings and diverting flashings and over a drip edge flashing into the gutters.

Gutters need to be securely fastened, properly slopped, free of debris and not leaking from holes in the main runs or from ends or corners. Leaf guards are always recommended when trees are present to keep them clean and free flowing. Water continues to flow from the gutters, down the downspouts which need to be securely fastened to the home and free of debris.

Extensions from the downspouts are recommended to extend six to ten feet from the foundation at a drop rate of one inch minimum per six feet to a positive downhill grade location. Although above ground extensions can function to divert water, they are unsightly and impractical as they are often obstacles in the yard for regular routine maintenance and can become damaged or dislodged. Buried drain tile extensions with pop ups are the preferred method and system for this purpose.

The final element of Water Shed is the grading around the property. It would be the ideal situation in a perfect world if the house were built on a hill but since most are not, at the very minimum the house should be built above street grade at a rate of one inch per every five or six feet so that all rainfall and Water Shed will run downhill to the streets swales, gutters and drainage system or other property locations.

Positive grading Sheds Water away from the homes foundation and begins from six to eight inches below the homes siding. Negative grading are any areas where grading is or has dropped below the minimum of one inch drop per five or six feet whereby water can pool or shed back towards the foundation. Driveways and walkways that have settled, heaved, cracked or are negatively slopped towards the foundation can divert or allow water back towards the foundation walls. Water Shed at the foundation can allow water intrusion into the crawlspace or basement causing water damage to the foundation, undermining footings and or water damage to interior finished areas.

Dry rotted wooden components are a result of continued saturation and can promote wood destroying organisms. Mold is a result of a water problem. Whenever I find a deficiency at any level of this Water Shed system or any of its components, I will be looking further downstream for the water damage as a result. All of the visible deficiencies or water damaged items and components will be recommended for evaluation and repairs or replacements by their respective professional, but only after all of the above Water Shed systems and components have been repaired or replaced and corrected to a satisfactory result.

I always make it a point to explain and overview this Water Shed system to my clients as the single most important thing I want them to understand about their new homes. Every home is unique with its own set of unique circumstances that need to be addressed and resolved. When correctly done, it will function quietly behind the scenes, maintenance free.

If you understand how your home sheds water you will be empowered to ensure it stays that way; not only to protect your investment, but your health and well-being.

