

Exterior

MODULE

STUDY SESSION 1

1. The first Study Session outlines the Scope of Exterior inspections according to the ASHI®/CAHI Standards of Practice.

Note: ASHI® Stands for the American Society of home Inspectors.
CAHI stands for the Canadian Association of Home Inspectors.

This Session also discusses lot grading.

2. Once you've completed this Study Session, you will be able to –
 - list nine things to be included and eight things to be excluded during an exterior inspection according to our professional Standards
 - describe in one sentence the importance of surface water control around a house and assess its quality.
 - list four common grading problems, along with their implications and inspection strategy
3. This Study Session should take you roughly 45 minutes to complete.
4. Read Chapter 2 — Lot Grading of the Exterior Section of **The Home Reference Book™** before starting this Session.
5. Quick Quiz 1 is included at the end of the Session. You may write your answers in the book.
6. Watch the Surface Water Control part of the Video before starting this Session.



► 3.0 LOT GRADING

It's Really Important!

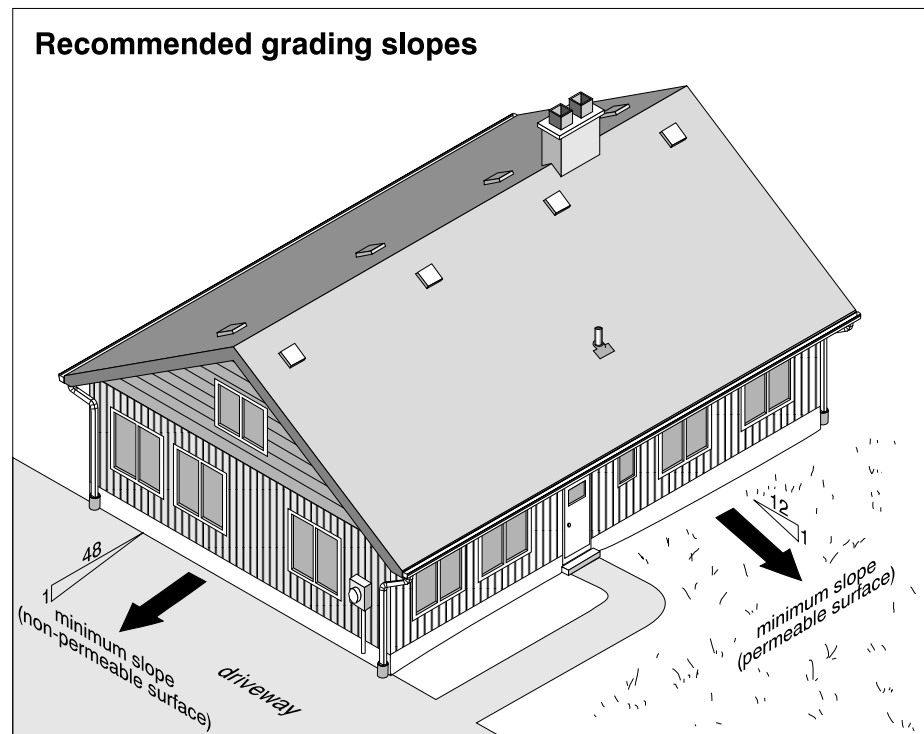
It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of lot grading. Where houses have basements, wet basements are the most common complaint that home inspectors hear.

Wet Basements And Damaged Foundations

When surface water is drained **away** from the building, there are fewer water problems in crawlspaces and basements and much less risk of deterioration to the foundations due to hydrostatic or frost pressures. Ground sloping toward a building funnels water from rain or melting snow against the building and may cause considerable damage.

One Inch Per Foot For Six Feet

While there is disagreement about the exact slope of the grade, and how far it has to be maintained away from houses, a slope of **one inch per foot for at least six feet** is a common recommendation. Home inspectors usually do not measure these slopes. As a rough guide, you should be looking for a slope that is visible to the eye.



Impervious Surfaces

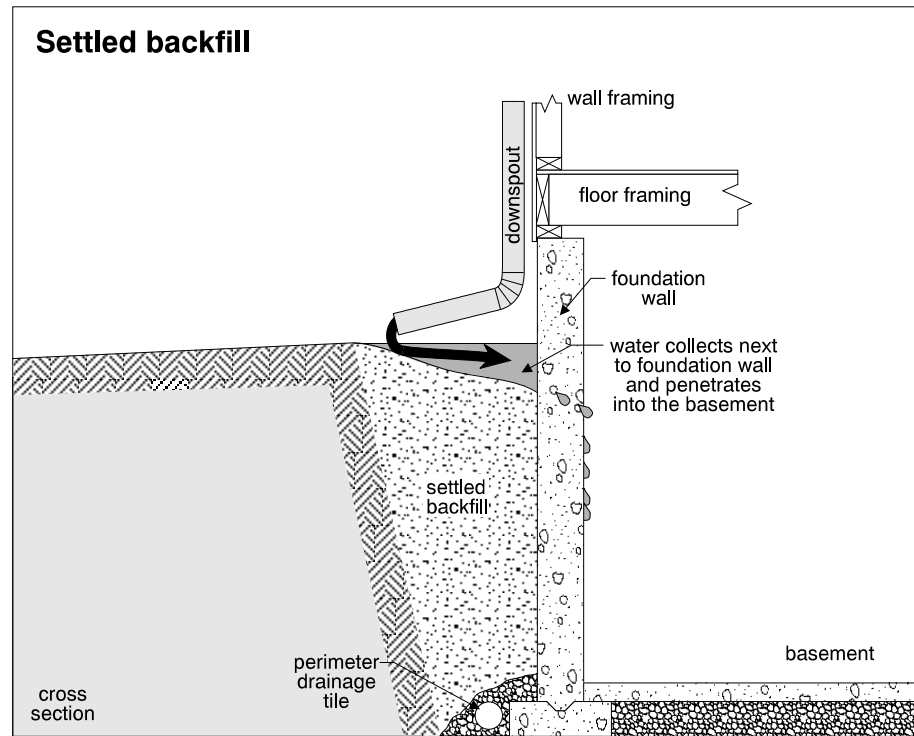
Something that is not considered in this simple guideline but warrants consideration is whether or not the ground surface absorbs water or keeps water out. For example, an asphalt or concrete driveway adjacent to a building can have a slope less than one inch per foot for six feet and still be effective. As long as there is a slope down away from the house of at least one inch over four feet, that should be adequate.

The other side of the coin is that an impervious surface that slopes down toward the house can be a disaster. None of the surface water will soak into an asphalt driveway, so it will all accumulate against the house.



Settled Backfill

In houses with continuous perimeter foundations, the disturbed soil adjacent to the house is backfilled after construction. Even if this backfill is well compacted, the soil close to the building may settle for the first year or two after construction. The deeper the foundation, the greater the settlement, typically. Although the builder may create a finished grade that provides good drainage initially, this settling backfill can create an improper slope.



Implications The implications of poor lot grading are –

- wet basements and crawlspaces
- damage to foundations
- damage to siding material, in severe cases

Strategy Look at the slope of the grade around the entire building and consider the paths available for runoff. Most inspectors don't use levels. If you can't see any slope, it's suspect. Consider the soil conditions if you have any knowledge of them, and consider whether the surface materials are free-draining.

Grading Improvements You may recommend improving the grading. This often involves the addition of topsoil. Resodding may be needed as well. Remember that dirt cannot be piled against siding. There may not be enough space between the existing grade and the top of the foundation to allow enough soil to be added to change the grade. In this case, other measures will be needed.

Basement Windows Regrading sometimes brings soil levels up to basement windows. Window wells may be needed to protect windows and their frames from contact with the soil.



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QUICK QUIZ 1

INSTRUCTIONS

- You should finish Study Session 1 before doing this Quiz.
- Write your answers in the spaces provided.
- Check your answers against ours at the end of this Section after the Final Test.
- If you have trouble with the Quiz, reread the Study Session and try the Quiz again.
- If you did well, it's time for Study Session 2.

1. We only have to look at vegetation for

2. When might it be important to check a fence?

3. You do have to inspect hot tubs.

True False

4. What is the most common complaint that home inspectors hear about basements?

5. What is the commonly recommended slope for ground around a house?

