

Keep Pests Out Of Your Crawl Space!

By: John Smith

No one wants to share their home with cockroaches, termites, rats or mice. We work hard to keep pests out of our homes. We put spray down so ants don't come in, we kill spiders that come in and often times, we scream if a mouse enters our home (ok maybe that last one is just me).

What many homeowners don't realize is that they literally have the power to cut down the entry doors by which these pests come into the home. Homes with encapsulated crawl spaces seal off the ground's moisture so pests can not enter and have to go elsewhere to find shelter. An added bonus is that encapsulation minimizes mold and mildew growth, which means you'll have a more structurally sound and healthier home than if mold and mildew ran rampant.

How do I encapsulate my crawl space?

There are a few steps to encapsulate your crawl space, which is also known as a vapor barrier. First, all standing water is removed from the crawl space to eliminate pooled water and moisture. This also lowers the humidity, which is the leading culprit in growing mold and gives pests one less reason to be a visitor in your home.

Next, the crawl space is sealed off with a CleanSpace 20-mil thick liner which is tough enough to prevent rips and tears by servicemen and workers, since they make up the majority of crawl space traffic. This liner is much tougher than those found in home improvement stores. They are made specifically to withstand people moving through a crawl space. Plus, this barrier naturally seals off entry ways that many rats, mice and other pests use to come into your house.

The vapor barrier system features a plastic membrane which allows any water vapor that does come up from the earth, to flow away. The benefit of this is that the moisture does not just sit and mold. Instead, makes its way to a sump pump which is the next step in encapsulating a crawl space.

A sump pump is installed in the low-point of the crawl space so that any moisture that does enter the space, is whisked away from the home. Sump pumps come with back-up pumps so that even if one pump can not handle the flow of water coming in, or did not work for any reason, a back-up pump would then kick on.

A sump pump alarm is also a great idea because it will sound an alarm if water is detected in the crawl space. So if a storm comes through in the middle of the night and your space gets wet, the alarm will sound. This lets you rest easy knowing that you don't have to worry about water coming in to your crawl space - you'll be notified if it does. Plus, you probably don't go into your crawl space more than a couple times a year so you wouldn't see the water and critters that come into your home that way.

The last step is to install a high-capacity dehumidifier like the SaniDry CSB. The CSB is specifically made to excel in wringing moisture from crawl spaces. The reason this is good is that moisture and organic material are what mold and mildew literally feed on. If a space is below 60% relative humidity, then mold and mildew can't grow there! This means the infrastructure of the home can not rot, creating soft spots in floorboards, and weakening the overall home structure.

Also, air moves in a home from the bottom upward. This means that air comes in from the ground and into the basement. The air warms and moves up, into your home, and out through the attic. So if there is mold in the crawl space, those same mold spores are also going into your home. Because of this, many adults and children have chronic allergies that do not go away until the crawl space is dried out, encapsulated and mold-free. Who knew your health could actually be improved by drying out your crawl space!!

Where do I find a professional?

Keep pests out of your home once and for all. To get pests out of your home and a vapor barrier installed the right way - call a repair contractor.

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