

BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION

Your house has cracks in the walls, sticking windows and doors and possibly even water in the basement. You may want to deal with the water issue (Foundation waterproofing, crack repair, weeping tile and sump system installation). Or you may want to replace the foundation to provide for better structure and more developable space. Another possibility might be to lower the basement floor to add to your living area. Your foundation needs professional attention! Can your foundation be fixed? Will your home or building be structurally sound again? Will you be able to sell it?

Accurate diagnosis of the real problem is crucial to success. Choosing an experienced company and proven technology increases your chances of success. Seeking advice from an experienced team increases the odds of success and limits the risks. It is recommended that finding a reliable company begins in the trade associations. Good companies that are committed to quality, training and customer service tend to be active in their industry and their trade associations. These companies are attracted by the education and technical research attained by these groups.

The next step in your process should be to interview prospective companies you believe share your values and can offer you the experience and service you seek. Have them view your project to examine your needs and allow them to offer recommendations and direction. Your objective is to assess the company's capability, experience, knowledge, technology, recommended options and their ability to work with you. Pay particular attention to their ability to speak comfortably with you and clearly explain the decisions you have to make. Prepare a list of questions to ask during this "interview". (We have included a checklist in this handout for your use)

After choosing a company that can deliver a professional project or repair, then you are ready to consider price. **Judge competence first and the ability to complete the job before considering price.** A low price on a failed repair or project doesn't help your situation. Next consider price in relation to options. Usually skill and your preference will line up proportionally. Like everything else, you get what you pay for. The decision is how much risk are you willing to take in relation to the price and quality of choices of the company you prefer. If you are seeking a lasting repair, good quality project and warranty, with price as a second objective, then you can choose from the top of your list. If focus is driven by price over confidence and risk, then you face a different decision. Choose wisely.

The Lowest Bidder John Ruskin (1819-1900)

"It's unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money - that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing that you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot, it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is wise to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have had enough to pay for something better."

Abarent Construction is a member of various trade organizations and enjoys networking with other professionals to stay informed on new ideas and products. Abarent has been instrumental in affecting change with their local Building Code Authority on how the Industry's permit process is defined and constantly looks to set an example of how projects and clients should be taken care of.

OUR PROCESS:

Estimating / Interview Process

- ✓ Client request information is taken by Office Manager and an appointment is Scheduled with an Estimator
- ✓ General Manager reviews all client requests and scheduled appointments
- ✓ Appointment confirmation is done by the Estimator or Office Manager
- ✓ Estimator meets the client on-site and reviews all the information
- ✓ Estimator provides a written detailed estimate on what is required
- ✓ Estimator provides the client with a comprehensive Reference Package and proof of licensing
- ✓ General Manager reviews all estimates written by Estimators
- ✓ Estimator follows up with the client to answer any further questions

Work Process

- ✓ Contract is approved by the client
- ✓ Office Manager Schedules a Utility Locate
- ✓ Work is scheduled by the General Manager and client is notified (This occurs every Monday)
- ✓ If necessary Engineering and Permits are obtained
- ✓ Crew is orientated and sent out to the project with an experienced Foreman (All safety and client concerns are discussed)
- ✓ Estimator visits the project as required during the project
- ✓ Projects are reviewed every morning by Management with the Crew Superintendent
- ✓ Client is updated by the Office Manager on daily progress
- ✓ Superintendent inspects the completed project prior to invoicing
- ✓ Office Manager contacts the client to confirm project satisfaction and arranges to deliver the invoice

Hiring a contractor can be a confusing and frustrating process, especially when the project at hand involves a specialty industry such as foundation repair. From company to company opinions, methods and prices vary. Sometimes the differences can be so dramatic that you start to doubt everyone. At Abarent Construction Ltd. we like to take a "LOGICAL" approach. What is being recommended has to make sense to you...the client. We enjoy being given the opportunity to explain differences between our quotation and others. There are always reasons for differences and it is part of our job to help you understand exactly what your options are and what you are getting for your money. Whether it's foundation waterproofing or a structural project, let us help you understand answers to some of the common questions and concerns that we've noticed people facing over the years when making a decision.

METHODS ARE DIFFERENT FROM COMPANY TO COMPANY.....

This has to be one of the biggest items creating confusion when you have more than one quote on the "table". There are various methods for many situations. At Abarent we choose methods and products that are proven and suitable for the situation. Our methods come from countless hours and many years of research and testing. This doesn't mean they are always the "cheapest". It is important that you feel totally comfortable with the method being proposed to solve your problem. You shouldn't need to rely on a warranty if the job is done right with the proper materials the first time.

(A)WATERPROOFING AND WEEPING TILE DISCUSSION: Any preventative repair or remediation of a leaking basement needs specific considerations. You should be aware of product limitations. In particular the coating suggested for use on the foundation wall.

- Is the product being used biodegradable?
- Do products allow for expansion and contraction?
- Is the coating being applied to the foundation a waterproofing or damp-proofing product?
- What are the manufacturer's application recommendations and is the company doing your project following Manufacturer and Building Code requirements? **ASK FOR THE PRODUCT NAME AND SPECIFICATIONS!**
- Have you read the specifications for the product?
- Is the installer of the product experienced in its application?
- Is the product intended for your specific application?

We'll briefly go over some of the methods encountered in our industry for foundation waterproofing and repair. The following are brief summaries, bearing in mind typical application procedures of the companies that have a known history of using them. All are **exterior** methods.

Method	Pro's	Con's	Recommend
1. Single Application of Tar & Geodrain Styrofoam Drainage Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick • Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not constitute Water-proofing by manufactures specifications nor does it meet Building Code requirements for Water-proofing. IT'S DAMP-PROOFING! • Tar is bio-degradable • Tar is not flexible • Typically backfilled before Tar is dry • Cracks are not repaired 	NO
2. Tar / Poly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick • Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poly sags during backfill • Poly Rips • Does not constitute Water-proofing by manufactures specifications nor does it meet Building Code requirements for Water-proofing. IT'S DAMP-PROOFING! • Tar is bio-degradable • Tar is not flexible • Typically backfilled before Tar is dry • Cracks are not repaired 	NO

Method	Pro's	Con's	Recommend
3. Tar / Mesh / Tar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not constitute Water-proofing by manufactures specifications nor does it meet Building Code requirements for Water-proofing. IT'S DAMP-PROOFING! Tar is bio-degradable Tar is not flexible 	NO
4. Plastic Cement / Tar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap Quick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not constitute Water-proofing by manufactures specifications nor does it meet Building Code requirements for Water-proofing. IT'S DAMP-PROOFING! Tar is bio-degradable Tar is not flexible Typically backfilled before Tar is dry 	NO
5. Dimple-Board (PLaton) / Drainage Mat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap Quick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not considered Water-proofing Does not repair cracks 	NO
6. Tar-Mesh-Tar-Mesh-Tar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Building Code 10 to 15 year life span WATER-PROOFING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bio-degradable Not Flexible 	Sometimes
7. Bakor 770-06 Membrane & 1" Styrofoam applied after initial set of membrane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible, is ideal for foundations with moving cracks. Not Biodegradable Styrofoam (R5 value) Styrofoam is approved protection board. 25 year plus life span WATER-PROOFING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More expensive than other methods Takes more time than most methods 	YES

As you can see when choosing a company and their proposed method you need to decide if you want to water-proof your foundation or **will you "settle" for damp-proofing**. There is a very big difference. We provide manufacturer's specifications for the products we use. Manufacturer's Product Specifications are something that you should request from any contractor. After all, this is the barrier stopping water from coming into your basement.

INTERIOR VS. EXTERIOR REPAIRS..... A common decision that a homeowner has to make when faced with a "leaky basement" is should they facilitate repairs from the interior or exterior. Interior repairs have their place. Their place, however, does not have anything to do with foundation crack repair or waterproofing. Interior methods are of a temporary nature and carry very limited warranties. Any interior remedy has specific limitations, which should be explained to you if they are quoted on for your purpose. Lack of flexibility, uncertain penetration into the crack and adhesion issues to name a few whether it's grout or an injection material.

(A)STRUTURAL WORK (UNDERPINING, WALL REPLACEMENT AND INTERIOR PWF WALLS): With structural work there are several important factors that should enter into a decision.

- Proper Engineering should have gone into the design of any proposed work.

- A Building Permit is required for structural work. The building Permit Application would require an Engineered design. In some cases Engineer's inspections and Compliance Letters / Schedules are required.
- If Underpinning is being performed, does it address the cause of the problem and is it an Engineered and proven application?
- If Underpinning is being performed has there been a soil bore hole done and has the pile being used been properly engineered?
- Have the various options for underpinning piles (meaning types of piles) been discussed with you?
- Have the various foundation types and methods for wall replacement been discussed with you and are you fully aware of the differences? **THERE ARE DIFFERENCES AND THESE DIFFERENCES AFFECT COST.**
- Is the company qualified and experienced enough to do your work?

It is a **common mistake for the average person to hire a company based solely on price**, without considering the method used and what is involved. This leads us to the next most common dilemma

PRICES VARY SO MUCH BETWEEN COMPANIES

Price has a multitude of contributing factors. One of the many factors would be the method used. To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, one of the waterproofing methods that we recommend, utilizes a product that costs over \$175 per pail. Cheaper products on the market can cost as low as \$35 per pail. There is a huge difference between what each is capable of and when each should be used in a remedial situation. Another example of how methods can affect price would be the following scenario: *Company "ABC" uses high quality products that suit the job and follow the ideal specifications for application and use. The engineering that went into the design of the structural portion of their project allows for no possible failure. Company "XYZ" uses the cheap products and rushes the job to save time. The structural portion of their project has limitations and should be improved. In a lot of cases no Engineering or Permits have been obtained. Company "XYZ's" project is done with less cost. Abarent Construction Ltd. prefers to operate like company "ABC" to give you **proven, long-term solutions.***

Price can vary between companies due to their Business Plan or possibly lack of one. I see companies yearly that come and go. Most often the company that operates out of their garage or back yard and has no investment in the community is more likely the company that you'll have a problem with. Be cautious in hiring any company. Question length of time in business and who carries the responsibility for the company. I have witnessed several new companies in our industry the last couple of years profess lengthy time being in business. One in particular states that they have been "Specializing since 1989" when in fact they have been in business for less than 3 years. Ask questions!!

Abarent Construction Ltd. maintains a business location where we maintain an office and sales staff to serve your concerns quickly. Our warehouse allows us to buy quantities of materials at

a more economical rate. We have a solid Business Plan to help stay on track and have built a valued reputation that serves hundreds of clients each year. Abarent Construction Ltd. has been in business for over 27 years and plan on being around for many more years to serve our clients and community. We do have overhead, which is incorporated into the cost of our work. This is part of doing business with a company that's building for the future.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN WARRANTY?

Too often the consumer fails to understand what a warranty covers. People tend to glance at a number and think that all of their problems are covered for "X" amount of years. I have to chuckle when I reflect on the memory of a few years ago when I had the chance to read the fine print of a competitor's warranty "blurb". Effectively this company was going to warranty the products that they used would still exist in 25 years.

At Abarent Construction Ltd. our warranty covers any defects in either workmanship and / or materials for the time frame indicated. Warranty periods vary according to the method used. I do not hesitate to tell you that we have had instance to return to a house. When this has happened, we give it our immediate attention and spare no expense to make things right. Profit on the job becomes secondary. We have had to return to less than 1% of our jobs and ultimately even these are 100% successful. The moral of the story is, be aware of what exactly the warranty is and what kind of company is backing it up.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the best piece of advice I can offer is to always ask questions and make yourself aware of all the details pertaining to your project. I will always make myself available to answer any question a client may have. At Abarent Construction Ltd. we do not hesitate to provide references, WCB clearances, proof of Liability Insurance or license numbers. Feel free to drop by our office location or talk to any of our product suppliers. I truly look forward to being of service to you and hope that this info letter has helped you in your process.

Sincerely,

Kevin Braddell

Kevin Braddell
President

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Before you hire your contractor, ask questions!

Keep this handy as a Checklist:

- Has the contractor provided you with references for work done by their company similar to work you are considering?
- Has the contractor provided you with trade and supplier references? It is important that the company be stable and financially secure, especially when warranties on work are so important.
- Have you checked several of the contractor's references with satisfactory results?
- Are you satisfied that the contractor has adequate WCB coverage? Be aware that as a property owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that proper WCB insurance coverage is in place, otherwise "the property owner" could be held liable for the workers injuries. (Even the contractor's employees).
- Have you confirmed the contractor has adequate Liability and Damage Insurance? You should be sure you are covered for damage to your property due to your contractor's work as well as coverage against accidents on the job-site.
- Does the contractor have a safety policy in effect for all of its employees? Non-adherence to Occupational Health and Safety guidelines do have an effect on the property owner should there be a problem.
- Is the company you are considering hiring a "Home Based Company" or possibly a "part-time affair" for the owner? You want to make sure that the company you deal with has solid business ties in the community with an investment in its future and a solid business plan. Remember, you are spending good money to ensure that the problem is solved properly, but should further problems arise, you want to be sure that the company will be around in the future to honor any warranty.
- Does the company you are considering hiring have an infrastructure to handle its clients (Office Staff, Estimator, Foreman, Superintendent, Company Engineer etc.)?
- Does the contractor provide you with choices and adequate information for you to make intelligent decisions?
- Has the contractor provided you with a detailed Contract that goes over the specifics of your project, costs and specifications for products to be used?
- Is the contractor concerned with your requirements, both financial and otherwise?

