

Ask Jon Eakes

HOW DO I PREVENT DRY ROT IN BASEMENT STUDS?

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Wood in contact with slightly humid concrete can easily develop dry rot. (search keyword "rot" for the title "WHAT IS DRY ROT?") This often happens to studs laid on the basement floor or standing up against basement walls. A perfectly dry basement will present no problem -- but how many basements do you know that are always perfectly dry? Dry rot in the studs can be prevented by:-- Using green, pressure-treated lumber, especially for the 2 x 4 that sits on the basement floor. -- Isolating the wood from the concrete with a plastic sheet or strip. A plastic sheet used to moisture-proof walls will serve the purpose. (search keyword "damp proof" for the title "DO I NEED TO MOISTURE PROOF THE BASEMENT WALL BEFORE INSULATING?") Or, you can staple plastic strips around the back side of all studs, preventing moisture from moving directly from the concrete into the stud. If your stud wall does not touch the concrete wall you only have to worry about the wood in contact with the floor.

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