

Ask Jon Eakes

HOW CAN I STOP FROST HEAVING FROM MOVING WING WALLS AND POSTS?

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Wing walls, posts, and concrete steps are common candidates for ad-freezing, even if they go below the frost line. They usually do not have proper granular back-fill around them, they have no weeping tiles under them, and they receive little or no heat from the basement. They are overlooked and considered unimportant -- until they lift up half the house. Some would simply argue that carports, wing walls, and the like don't belong in our climate, but that doesn't help you with the existing plaster cracks in your bedroom. Thermally connecting these structures to the house by way of horizontal insulation (or including the steps within basement perimeter insulation) can keep the frost away but it will cost you energy dollars. Changing the soil around them so it does not satisfy ad-freezing requirements can also solve the problem. (search keyword "freezing" for the title "WHAT IS BASEMENT FREEZE SHIFTING?") Greasing poles (which doesn't last too long) or wrapping them in plastic sheets can make them too slippery for the ice to grab hold. There are no set answers. The objective is to eliminate any one of the necessary conditions for ad-freezing -- and they will shift no more.

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