

INTRODUCTION

Usually a new home buyer or builder gives a lot of thought to the house floor plan and room arrangement, but often pays little attention to the soil, topography, and drainage conditions.

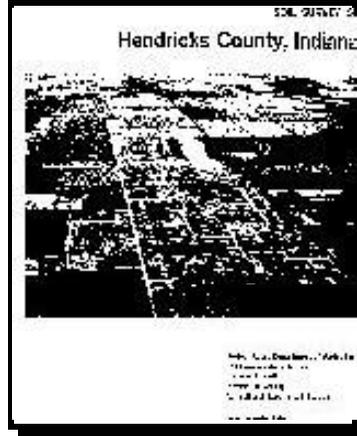


If you buy or build a home on a small city lot or on a 40-acre rural estate, the soil conditions and limitations must be considered.

This "Homebuyers Checklist" will prepare you to look for potential problems before taking that big step of buying or building.

Soils are often referred to as "dirt." "Dirt" is the stuff that is swept off the kitchen floor and should not be confused with **SOIL**, the valuable resource that supports our homes and roads, grows our food, flowers, trees and grass, and filters our septic waste. Soils are an important part of our living conditions and should be thoroughly investigated before making a decision about where you are going to call home.

All the different soil types in your county have been identified, mapped, and published in your County's Soil Survey. The soil survey contains information about each soil type. Soil surveys are available in the public libraries and from your local Soil and Water Conservation District Office.



DON'T FEEL OVERWHELMED, WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

For more information about soils and potential drainage problems contact the Soil & Water Conservation District office in your county listed below:

Boone County	(765) 482-6355 ext. 3
Brown County	(812) 988-2211
Hamilton County	(317) 773-1432
Hancock County	(317) 462-2283 ext. 3
Hendricks County	(317) 745-2555 ext. 3 http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/~hcsxcd
Johnson County	(317) 736-9540 http://www.swcd.org
Marion County	(317) 780-1765 http://www.doe.state.in.us/swcd
Monroe County	(812) 334-4318 ext. 3
Morgan County	(765) 342-5594 ext. 3
Shelby County	(317) 392-1394 ext. 3

Co-sponsored by:

Hoosier Heartland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc.
<http://www.hhrccd.org>

Other Resources:

Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Soil Conservation
Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The sponsoring agencies are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Homebuyers Checklist



Are you purchasing an existing home or building a new house?

This is one of the largest investments most people make. A mistake can make your dream home turn into an expensive nightmare.

The soils, drainage, surroundings, and foundation are often overlooked when buying or building a house. Overlooking any of these items can involve hazards that are very costly to overcome.

This pamphlet contains a checklist to help you find these hazards. By using this checklist as part of your evaluation process, you can reduce the chances of your dream home becoming a money pit nightmare.

From your local Soil and Water Conservation District

QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK BEFORE YOU BUY!

YES/NO

1. Does the site flood during any portion of the year?
2. Is the site in or near a flood plain? Or next to a creek or stream? Will you be required to obtain flood insurance?
3. Are the house or outbuildings located in a drainage swale or low area?
4. Does the site have a seasonal high ground water table?
5. Is there excessive dampness in crawl space?
6. Are there any cracks in the foundation, walls or floors?
7. Do the trees near the house have any dead limbs that are overhanging the house?
8. Does the house have evidence of wetness, such as discolored lower walls, mildew, or a musty odor?
9. Does the basement have foundation drains?
10. If there is a sump pump, is there a battery backup system?
11. Is the yard graded so the surface water will drain away from the house and/or lot?

YES/NO

12. Does the yard have a good layer of topsoil?
13. Are storm sewer inlets located near the house?
14. If a septic system is used, will it function properly all year?
15. If you plan to build a house, can you buy the lot with the condition that all necessary building permits will be obtained?

ITEMS FOR THOUGHT!

1. Do you have access to sanitary sewers? If not, will you be required to connect in the future?
2. Do you know if there are easements on the property?
3. Is public water available? If not, is there a well on the property? . . . What type of well? . . . and depth of well?

On questions:

1 - 8 - "NO" is the best answer

9 - 15 - "YES" is the best answer

If you have answered any questions differently it could be a potential problem and needs to be investigated further.

IF YOU PLAN TO BUILD . . .

We recommend you check with your county agencies (planning & zoning, surveyor, health department, and SWCD office) for information about local requirements. You should also seek professional assistance in developing your plans.



Stockpiles of soil, building materials and debris during construction may cause damage to tree trunks and smother their roots.



Deliveries made at different ground locations on your lot can cause soil compaction. Soil on the street is unsightly and might create a hazard to motorists or cause water pollution.

FOR EXISTING HOUSES . . .

Excess moisture can cause mold and mildew to form on walls and in the basement. Check for stains on the walls and floors, also check the house for any musty odors.

Look for cracks in foundations. The soil may be settling causing the foundation to sink.



In the area surrounding your potential future home, look for dead spots in grass, standing water, and dead or dying trees. Any of these things could be a sign of drainage problems. The lack of adequate drainage is a major problem for many homeowners.

