



Eagle's Eye on Housing: Crawl Spaces

Dirt crawl spaces with open vents represent old crawl-space thinking.

Crawl spaces are a common foundation option in First Nations' communities. By minimizing the height of the foundation wall, both excavation and material costs involved in the construction can be reduced. Similarly, by incorporating less exposed surface area and a reduced volume of air to be heated, crawl spaces can minimize heating expenses while still providing access to protected storage areas.

Crawl-space thinking in the past used this costing model to economize on available funding dollars. Occupants of these units however found them to be musty and smelly, and the houses often had to be replaced prematurely. Crawl spaces can be designed and constructed to contain either heated or unheated space. As a general rule, heated crawl spaces will perform better than unheated crawl spaces. Today we think in terms of the house as a system, and use building-science principles in designing and selecting foundation types.

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