

How to Install an Area Wall

Area wells are required by the Uniform Building Code for two specific purposes: To provide for basement egress and to provide crawlspace access. An area well is basically a u-shaped piece of metal with a mount flange on either side. It lies on its side in front of a window or crawlspace access hole. Its primary purpose is to prevent backfill, shrubbery, or landscaping from obstructing the access. You can install an Amerimax Home Products ready-made area well. In either case, codes usually require that the area well be connected to, or served by, a foundation drain unless it is covered with a waterproof top.

Preparation

1. Dig down in front of the crawlspace access hole until you reach the top of the foundation footing.
2. If you are planning on building your own cover or installing a manufactured top, there is no need to provide for drainage. Otherwise, follow the next step.
3. Make sure that the foundation drain travels underneath the area well. If not, route perforated foundation drainage piping underneath it. Bed the pipe properly in drainage gravel.
4. Measure the width of the crawlspace access hole.
5. Purchase the proper size area well, allowing plenty of room for installing fasteners through the mount flanges into the foundation stem wall.

Installation

1. Set the area well in place on top of the foundation footing, spacing it evenly over the crawlspace access hole.
2. Mark the foundation stem wall where your fasteners will go.
3. Remove the area well.
4. Drill the proper size holes in the foundation stem wall with a rotor-hammer and bit.
5. Insert the concrete anchors.
6. Install the area well, making sure that the holes in the mount flanges line up with the concrete anchors.
7. Install the anchor washers and nuts and tighten them firmly.

