Uneven Floors, Sticking Doors and Cracks in the Same House

Homeowner guide

If a floor feels uneven, a door starts rubbing and a wall crack shows up, make one record that includes all three observations. The locations and timing help an engineer decide where to look first and whether the observations may be related.

Record what changed and when

Give each observation a number. Write down the room, floor and nearest fixed landmark, the date you first noticed it and any later change. Use a dated photo or inspection note when available. If you just moved in, write “first noticed at move-in” or “reported by inspector” and keep the source with your notes.

- **Floor.** Note where it feels sloped or where you see a change at a threshold, a floor-to-baseboard gap or an uneven surface. Photograph the area and the nearest doorway or wall so someone else can find it.
- **Door.** Record which door rubs, where it touches and whether the latch engages. Note whether this happens all the time or only at certain times. If you see a casing gap, photograph the opening and the gap.
- **Wall or slab.** Record where the crack begins and ends, the visible surface and any apparent change since an earlier photo. Take one view that places it in the room and one that shows the detail. RES, Cracks & Common Concerns

Map changes across rooms and floors

Sketch each relevant level, including rooms with observations and the adjacent spaces. Use the same orientation for each plan and mark a stair, exterior wall or corner you can identify on both levels. Add the observation numbers and photo filenames. Mark any overlap between levels as approximate. Use locations you can document from accessible spaces.

For example, **1** might be a floor-to-baseboard gap in the main-level hall, **2** a nearby door that rubs near its upper corner, and **3** a visible crack in a lower-level wall roughly below the hall. Write a short entry for each, such as “2 · Main-level hall closet · First noticed November 22 · Door rubs at the upper latch-side corner and still closes · Photo 02.” The map lets the engineer find each point and compare it with framing and support locations. Alignment on a sketch is a reason to look more closely.

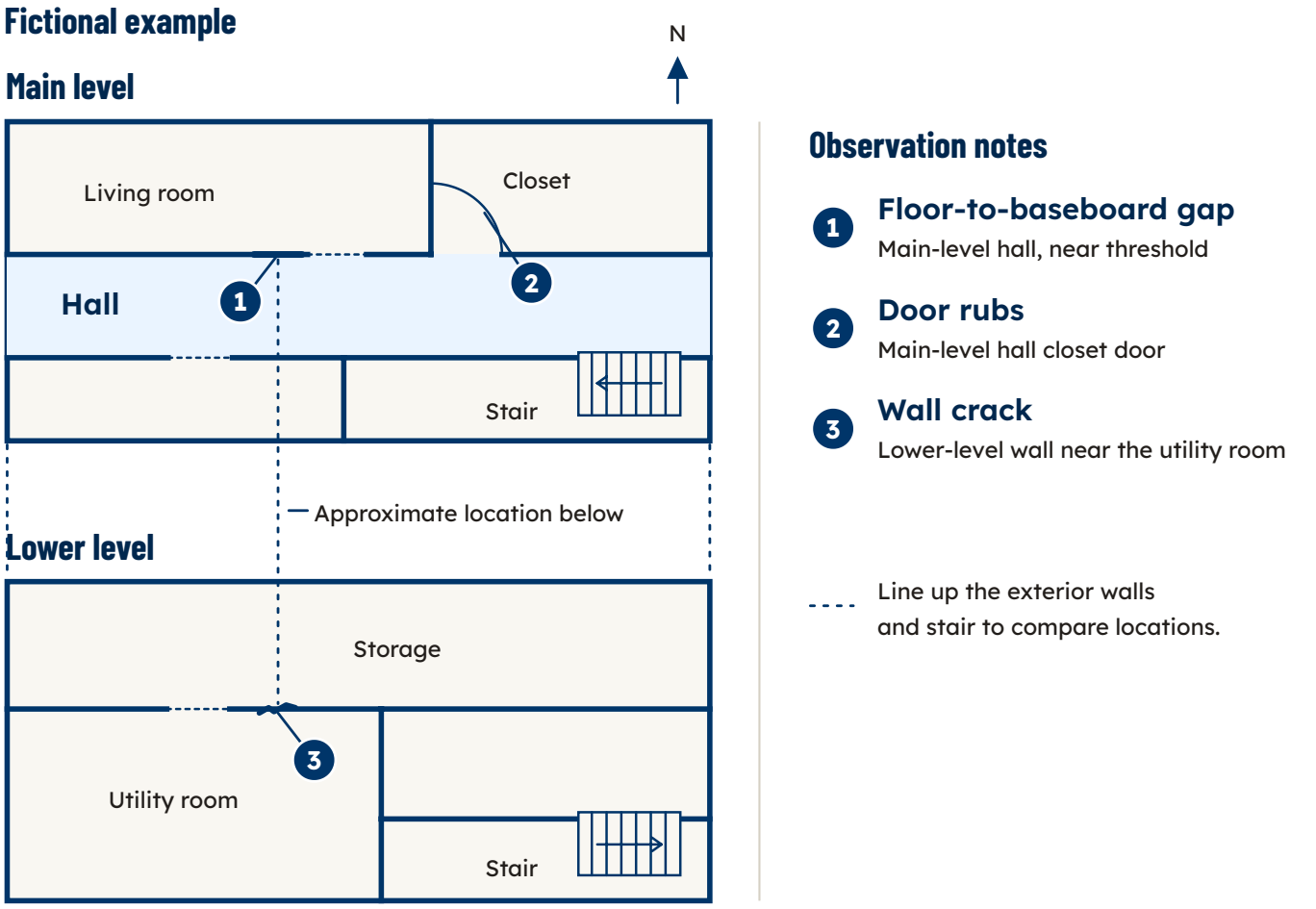


Figure 1. In this fictional example, the numbered notes help the reader locate observations on two levels.

Separate examples from the RES gallery



Figure 2A. Floor-edge example. A gap is visible where wood flooring meets white trim near an opening.

Photo credit — RES Media gallery, RES-M0236. Display orientation corrected.



Figure 2B. Door-casing example. A crack extends from the upper corner of the trim into the wall finish.

Photo credit — RES Media gallery, RES-M0212.



Figure 2C. Wall-crack example. The photo locates a diagonal crack beside a wall corner and below a boxed-in area.

Photo credit — RES Media gallery, RES-M0205.

Gather renovation and moisture history

Look for drawings, permits, dated photos and invoices for additions, removed walls, new flooring or previous foundation work. Note when rooms were finished or doors adjusted. Keep earlier floor readings or inspection notes if you have them, along with the locations and dates recorded.

Make a short timeline of any known plumbing leaks, crawlspace dampness, recurring runoff, grading changes or downspout work. Record where and when you observed the water and when repairs or changes occurred. Put these events beside the symptom dates so the engineer can compare the sequence. RES, Arvada Foundation Inspections

What the engineer may investigate

The engineer may compare the reported locations with the framing and supports that are visible. They may check for local conditions at an opening or floor finish, look at how joists and beams are supported, and review visible foundation and drainage conditions. A visit can help assess whether the observations have a likely relationship or need to be evaluated separately. ASCE, Structural Condition Assessment of Existing Buildings, Chapter 4

If the floor shape matters, the engineer may recommend relative elevation measurements. Earlier comparable readings or repeat measurements can help evaluate change over time.

Send the sketch, photo list, timeline and relevant records together. Ask which areas the engineer needs to see, what the first visit can address and what would warrant a follow-up visit, further measurements or access to concealed construction.

Field notes

Date _____ Property / level _____

Observation number / room _____

First noticed / later change / photo _____

What to do next

Need close-up photos of a crack on your sketch? Use How to Document a Crack in a Wall, Slab or Foundation

Planning an assessment of the changes you recorded? Read What Happens During a Foundation Inspection?