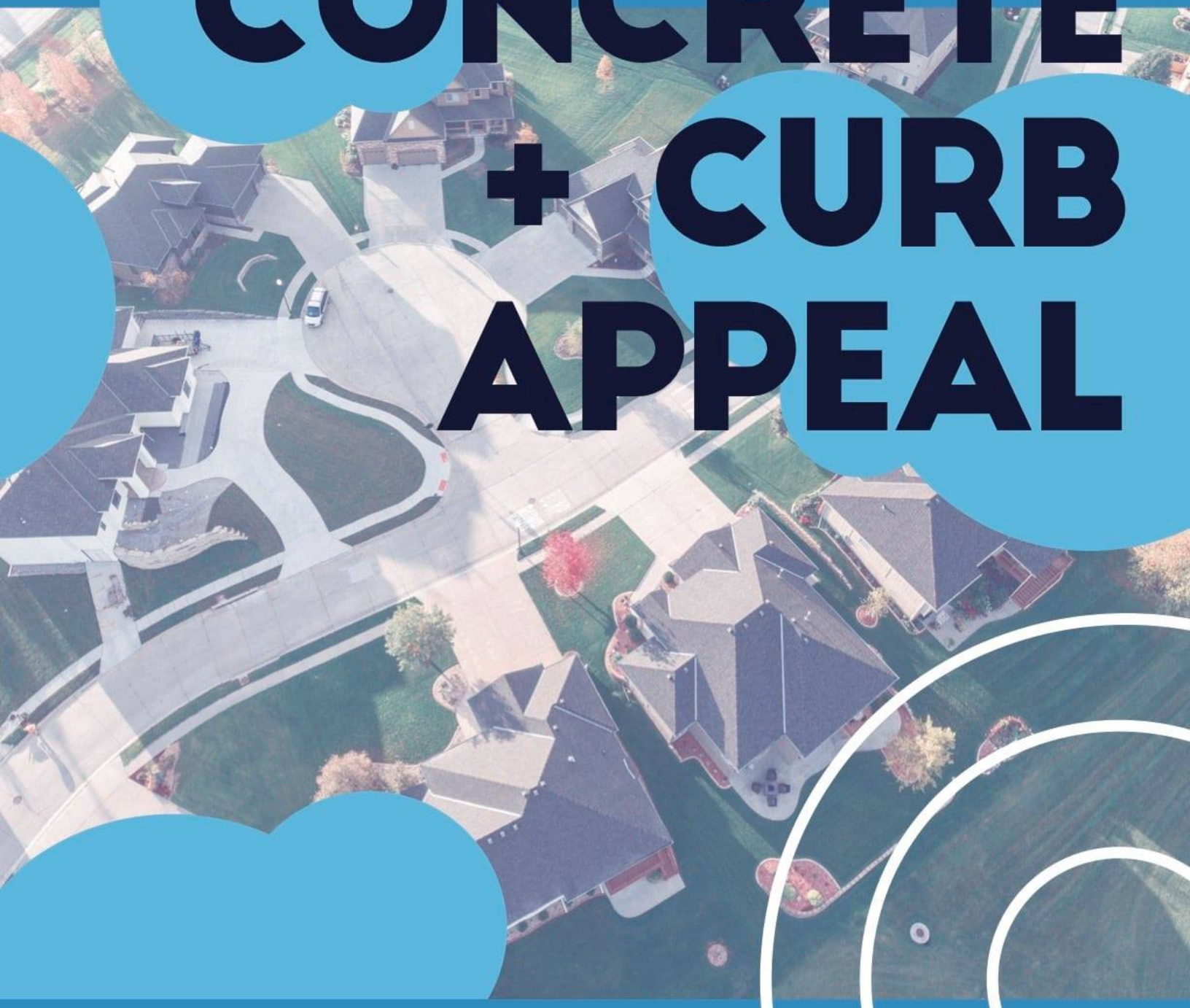
CONCRETE REPAIR

The Truth About CONCRETE + CURB APPEAL



You hear it thrown around a lot, but what exactly is curb appeal? Well, at its most basic, it's what differentiates your house from those around it to a passerby—either on foot or in a car—from the curb or beyond. It can be the overall design of the home. It can be its landscaping. It can be a combination of the two. But one thing common to virtually all homes is concrete: driveways, paths, sidewalks, pool decks and patios. In many ways, a home's concrete is its calling card—something a visitor sees before ever setting foot in your home.

So, when concrete deteriorates (and it always does), it can really let down the rest of the home by reducing, you guessed it, its curb appeal.

WHY GOOD CONCRETE GOES BAD

Concrete is amazing stuff. It can be poured and shaped into just about anything. It is strong and durable. But, it isn't indestructible. Over time, concrete can crack, sink and deteriorate due to a variety of factors, including:

Poorly Compacted Fill Soil

When your home was built, contractors likely moved soil around the property for construction purposes: to achieve design grades, as backfill within utility trenches and as backfill against foundations. When fill soil is not compacted well, it settles, taking any overlying concrete slabs with it. Sometimes voids form between the slab and the soil which, most often, results in slab cracking and settlement.

Soil Shrinkage

Another cause of soil movement is drought. During dry conditions or even just during periods of warm weather and low precipitation, soil under your concrete can dry out and shrink, again taking overlying concrete with it immediately, or creating voids. The concrete above these voids eventually cracks and sinks, especially if any weight is placed on it.

Soil Softening

When rain returns after a sustained dry period, the water has even easier pathways to get under the slab due to cracks and crevices that are present after shrinkage. And this wetted, softened soil may now be too weak to support heavy or sustained vehicle loads. In worst-case conditions, the soil erodes and washes away completely, leaving behind large voids and areas of unsupported slabs that can sink and become uneven.

Moisture

Water seeps into cracks and pores of untreated concrete, and when temperatures drop, that trapped moisture expands as it turns to ice. When freezing water is confined and restricted from expansion, the forces that are generated may be enough to damage the concrete. Over time, this repeated freezing and thawing results in the surface of your concrete exhibiting symptoms of pitting and flaking.

Oil, Gas and Other Chemicals

Concrete's porous nature also makes it susceptible to staining from oil, gas and other chemicals if left untreated. Just as with cotton or wool fabrics, concrete becomes stained when contaminants penetrate the surface and take hold. This is the reason you treat a living room couch with a spray-on stain repellent. Concrete, too, can be treated to prevent staining. This treatment can also prevent damage caused by the freeze/thaw cycle.

WHY YOU SHOULD FIX YOUR CONCRETE PROBLEMS NOW

Because they typically develop and worsen slowly, concrete problems are easy to ignore. But things only get worse and more complex to fix as the years pass.

So, maybe you're putting off addressing your concrete problems because you think the only answer is disruptive, noisy, messy concrete replacement. You picture old concrete being jackhammered out and hauled away. New concrete being poured and left to cure for up to a week or more. And, when it's all said and done, the soil issues that caused your concrete to fail in the first place are still there lurking beneath the slabs.

But, there is a better way—a way to lift, level and stabilize concrete permanently and have it ready for use within just 48 hours. The solution is **lightweight expansive polyurethane foam**. This foam is forced under the slabs while in liquid form. It runs quickly and finds every crack and fissure. Then it expands to fill these spaces, lifting the concrete above it and compressing the soil beneath. But not all foams and foam installers are the same. Make sure to do some research before hiring a contractor.

In addition to foam leveling, thanks to another new technology, old, worn-out concrete can even be resurfaced with a layer of polymer cement so that it looks brand-new, with minimal disruption and minimal mess. When combined with foam leveling and other protective measures, it can restore your home's concrete so that it's virtually like-new.

Peace of Mind. Quality of Life. Property Value.

The bottom line is, concrete problems don't get better with time. And, that means they don't get less expensive to fix either. When you make the decision to fix them, you'll not only restore, and maybe even improve, your home's value and curb appeal, but you'll also be able to sleep soundly in the knowledge that your home's concrete issues have been put behind you, and you and your family can once again enjoy your home the way its builders intended.