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**The Question** What to do about basement flooding?



Christine Villano of Basement Solutions of the Hudson Valley injecting high pressure expanding polyurethane foam into cracks to seal off water from recent storm damage and flooding.

The most ominous question for Hudson Valley residents of late has been this: Is it going to rain again today? The devastation caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, along with record rainfall, cannot be understated. Yet even if you have been fortunate enough to avoid the worst of the damage, the chances are unfortunately good that you may be looking at a confounding problem: water in the basement.

What once might have been thought to be job for a mop and a high-powered fan has, for many, escalated into a much more significant problem. But what to do, and who to ask? Why, speak to the basement experts, of course. Frank and Christine Villano, of Newburgh's Basement Solutions of the Hudson Valley, have been exceptionally busy these last few months, solving these very issues. "You can't just go to Home Depot and buy a Shop-Vac," says Frank Villano with a knowing smile. Villano is a certified geotechnical and structural engineer, and brings a complete approach to what can be a very detrimental situation. Quick fixes, Villano explains, may be no fix at all. "Some people are bringing in a landscaper with a chainsaw, and that may cause more damage down the line, and much more cost," adds Villano. He carefully assesses and manages each situation, and chooses from a variety of options.

So what are those solutions, exactly? According to Villano, the majority of their systems involve installing sump pumps—maintenance-free if done properly, Villano adds. A pipe is fixed through the basement floor, and the excess water is led cleanly to an established runoff; if necessary, a perimeter drain is created as well. Villano also insists that a battery backup for the pump is a necessity. "When do you need a battery backup most? During a storm, when the system is needed," Villano points out.

Of equal significance, however, is addressing the structural anomalies that allowed the water access in the first place. Sometimes, the remedy can be as simple as modifying the gutters and leaders, or adding exterior drainage, making sure the water from your neighbor's house isn't directed into your own. Recent technological advancements also provide another, more comprehensive solution: high-pressure polyurethane foam can be injected behind walls and below floors, completely waterproofing the basement or crawl space and minimizing any risk of mold. In addition, the new foam solution—NSF-certified and guaranteed to have no negative, toxic consequences—enhances the solidity of the home's foundation. "Now you're improving the structure," says Villano, "and not just solving the water problem."

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