

Spreader Plate by Finn Home Inspectors

Spreader plates intent is to spread the load so that the column does not deform the beam it is supporting. Some columns are sold with spreader plates, many of these spreader plates are inadequate. If the spreader plates are not large and thick enough, they can crush the beam and deform, see photo below.

Your inspector may identify a crushing beam witch often is not as deformed as shown below. The beam may just have a slight indenting above the spreader plate. This indicates that the spreader plate is not large enough and over time is likely to crush the beam more, allowing movement of the house floor structure. This can result in uneven floors, gaps and cracks in flooring and walls.

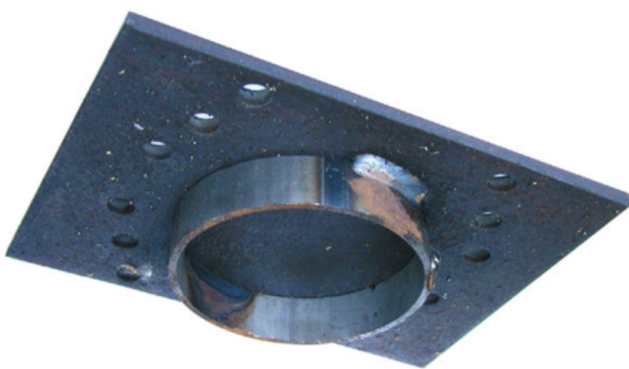
Ideally the spreader plate will be as wide as the beam and long enough as not to crush the beam, see photo below.

There are various names for these hefty spreader plates, Springfield plate is one name.

When replacing damaged or undersized columns contractors will often replace the columns with concrete filled steal columns or properly sized pressure treated columns, at least 6X6 inch. The wood columns may not need a steel plate if they are large enough, any column smaller than a 6X6 will likely need a spreader plate.



Inadequate spreader plate on top of a screw column, the plate is crushing into the main beam, a Failure.



Referred by some as a Springfield spreader plate, it is thick and as wide as the beam, twice as long as wide. it will not bend, it spreads the load well. Holes are to secure the plate to the beam which is required.



An installed Springfield plate, note spans entire width of main beam.