

A TIP FROM THE HOUSING CENTER

What is an ice dam?

An ice dam is a ridge of ice that forms at the edge of a roof and prevents melting snow (water) from draining off the roof. The water that backs up behind the dam can leak into a home and cause damage to walls, ceilings, insulation, and other areas. This is a silent but potentially costly threat building up on your rooftop this winter.

Preventing ice dams

Ice dams can be prevented by controlling the heat loss from the home.

Dealing with ice dams

Immediate action:

- Remove icicles and snow from the roof. This eliminates one of the ingredients necessary for the formation of an ice dam. A "roof rake" and push broom can be used to remove snow, but may damage the roofing materials.
- In an emergency situation where water is flowing into the house structure, making channels through the ice dam allows the water behind the dam to drain off the roof. Hosing with tap water on a warm day will do this job. Work upward from the lower edge of the dam. The channel will become ineffective within days and is only a temporary solution to ice dam damage.

Long-term action:

- Increase the ceiling/roof insulation to cut down on heat loss from your attic.
- Make the ceiling air tight so no warm air can flow from the house into the attic space.

WARNING!

- Any person on the roof during the winter or performing work on the roof from below is risking injury and risking damage to the roof and house. It is important to contact professionals to carry out this job.
- Whenever a house is tightened up, ventilation systems, exhausting devices, and combustion devices must have enough air to operate safely and effectively!