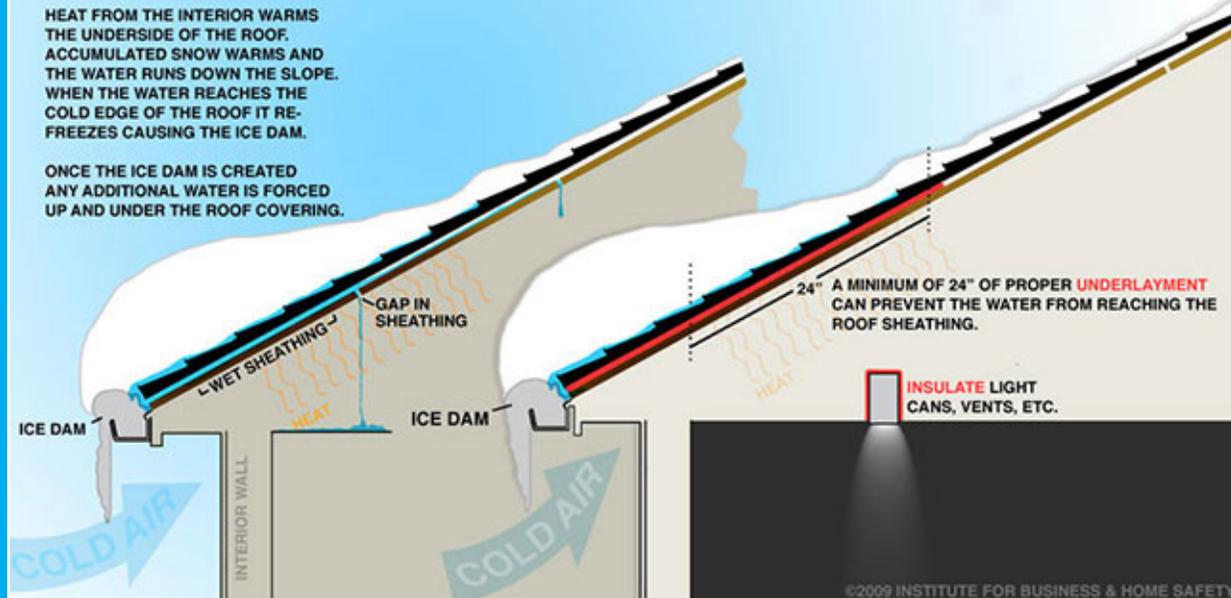


## WINTER HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS



# Preventing Ice Dams

Following a snowfall, normal drainage paths can freeze causing “Ice Dams” that can result in water damage and mold.

### Snow and Ice Dams

When the topic of winter home maintenance comes up, the emphasis is typically put on preventing frozen and broken water pipes. But one other aspect of winter weather home maintenance that homeowners need to be aware of is ice dams.

Ice dams form on the outside of the home (specifically on the edge of your roof before the gutter) following a snowfall. When heat from your home melts the snow on the roof, the snow runs toward the gutters to drain. However, ice dams form when this runoff of water hits the cold edge of the roofline, causing it to refreeze and block the drainage path.

When a drainage path becomes blocked, the other melting water has the

potential to seep in between the roof shingles - and thereby the home - leading to water damage and mold growth.

To make matters worse, ice dams are somewhat of a silent destroyer, as water enters the home gradually and typically damages the attic area first, which isn't a place that homeowners usually frequent. By the time many even realize there's a problem on their hands, it's when the damage has spread from the attic and into the ceiling below.



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### Preventing Ice Dams

It's common for homeowners to rev up their snowblowers and dig out their snow shovels after each winter snowfall to clear their driveways and sidewalks. But not to be ignored is the snow that has also fallen on the home. Hence, the best way to prevent an ice dam from forming is to incorporate roof maintenance into the post-snow shoveling routine.

#### Here are some tips:

Attempt to remove the first 3 to 4 inches of snow from your roofline to prevent ice dams from forming. This is best done with a roof rake or a long-handled brush that can permit you to remove the snow without the use of a ladder.

# Preventing Ice Dams

Simply knocking an ice dam with a roof rake is often enough to dislodge it so that water can drain again.



Make sure that downspouts are clear so that melted water has a chance to drain properly. If your area has received more than a foot of snow, it's best to clear not just the first 3 to 4 inches along your roofline, but as much as possible. A foot or more of snow has the potential to cause your roof to cave in or collapse. While incorporating roof maintenance into your snow removal routine is the best way to prevent ice dams immediately after a snowfall, there are other more long-term solutions that can be implemented.

These include:

- Insulating the attic: A well-insulated attic helps prevent the melt/freeze conditions in which ice dams form.
- Water-repellant membranes: Installing a water membrane underneath the roof shingles can act as extra protection to prevent water from seeping into the building envelope.

## Removing Ice Dams

While taking preventative measures are the best way to ensure that ice dams don't form, it should be noted that once an ice dam has formed it doesn't mean that water has entered the building. But it's always best to remove the ice dam as you notice it, well before it has a chance to cause damage to your home.

Safely removing an ice dam can be done in a number of ways:

1. Simply knocking an ice dam with a roof rake is often enough to dislodge it so that

water can drain again.

2. If the ice dam is too large, consider cutting a channel through it that will allow any standing water to drain properly.
3. While you never want to use rock salt on your roof, you can use calcium chloride to melt the ice dam and allow water to once again flow freely.
4. Finally, another option is to hire a snow removal contractor to resolve the problem.

## The Season Is Upon Us

Now is the time to make winter weather maintenance a priority. But even with all the proper measures in place, you still may be susceptible to a broken or frozen pipe or ice dam that could create a water loss. And that's where Vigilant Restoration can help in restoring your water-damaged property to a pre-loss condition. For more information on Vigilant's water damage restoration services call 410-761-0070.



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