

# Dealing With Ice Dams



If an ice dam gets big enough, it can cause severe damage to your home. Fortunately, they're preventable. Here are some tips:

## How Ice Dams Form

Heat from the attic warms up the roof, melts the snow and the runoff freezes at the roof overhang. This ice buildup then prevents water from running off the roof.

## Potential Damage

If water trapped behind the ice dam seeps under the shingles, it could flow into your attic and then your living spaces. This may ruin sheetrock and cabinetry, warp floors, stain ceilings and walls, and eventually lead to mold growth.

## Prevention Tips: Before a Storm

- **Insulate your attic.** More insulation helps to keep the roof the same temperature as the outside air. This will prevent the snow from melting.
- **Ensure good air flow.** Ridge and soffit vents circulate cold air under the roof. This helps lower your roof's temperature.

## Prevention Tips: After a Storm

- **Remove the first 3 to 4 feet of snow from your roof.** This prevents snow from freezing at your roof's edge.

**We recommend hiring a professional to remove the snow. But if you decide to do it yourself, follow these safety tips:**

- Use a roof rake instead of going on the roof or standing on a ladder
  - Remove the snow down to 2-3 inches instead of scraping it clean; this will prevent damage to your shingles
  - Keep ladders, shovels and roof rakes away from utility wires
  - Remove large icicles if they're hanging over doorways or walkways
- **Create a channel.** If an ice dam still forms, fill a large sock with a melting agent (preferably calcium chloride) and lay it across the dam. This will melt the ice and create a channel for the water to run through.

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