

PREVENTING ICE DAMS

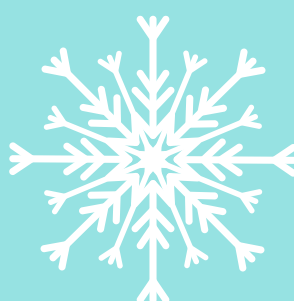


Ice dams are caused by uneven heat loss from your home. When snow collects on your roof and heated air rises from your attic, the snow is apt to melt and pool along the edge of your roof, refreezing inside your gutters. More water and snow then accumulate behind the dam, exacerbating the problem. The solution?

1

KEEP YOUR ATTIC WELL VENTILATED

Proper ventilation prevents moisture in your rafters, trusses, and roof sheathing, thereby reducing the risk of ice dams and mold. According to the Department of Energy, one square foot of free ventilation opening is recommended for every 150 square feet of attic space.



2

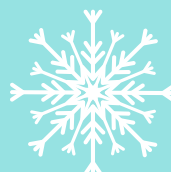
SEAL LEAKS TO CONFINE WARM AIR

Block warm air leakage near plumbing vents, junction boxes from ceiling fixtures, and attic hatches. Ideally this should be done *before* a home is fully constructed. After the fact, a "blower door test" and an infrared scan can be used to locate major leaks in houses and to determine whether they have been sealed effectively.

3

INSULATE YOUR ATTIC FLOOR

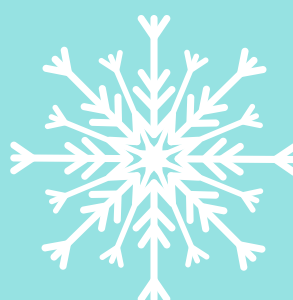
Insulation should be between 16 and 22 inches, to minimize the amount of heat rising into the attic from below. Keep in mind though, adding insulation without sealing attic bypasses could actually *increase* air leakage, diminishing the performance of your insulation.



4

CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS

Clean leaves and other debris from gutters (ideally before the first snow). This will help prevent ice buildup in your gutters.



5

CONSIDER AN ICE SHIELD

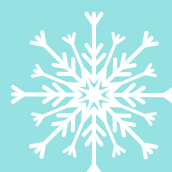
When it's time to re-roof, consider installing an ice shield beneath your new shingles. The rubberized nature of the material creates a gasket effect on nail shafts, so water cannot permeate.



6

INVEST IN A ROOF RAKE

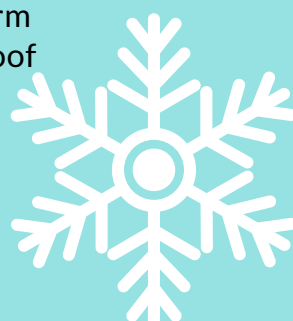
Roof rakes are tough to find right after a massive storm. So buy one *now*, and use it to clear the three to four feet of roof surface above your gutters whenever the next storm hits. Expert tip: choose a rake with wheels to prevent roof damage.



7

TRY A MELTING COMPOUND

If an ice dam has already formed, sprinkling a melting compound may help to break it up. Do not use traditional rock salt, as this product can deteriorate your gutters. To avoid injury, do not use an ax or ice pick either.



8

CONTACT AN ENERGY SPECIALIST

If you're not sure where warm air is escaping or how to properly seal existing leaks, an energy specialist may provide valuable recommendations. Many will visit your home for free, as a service provided by your energy company.

