

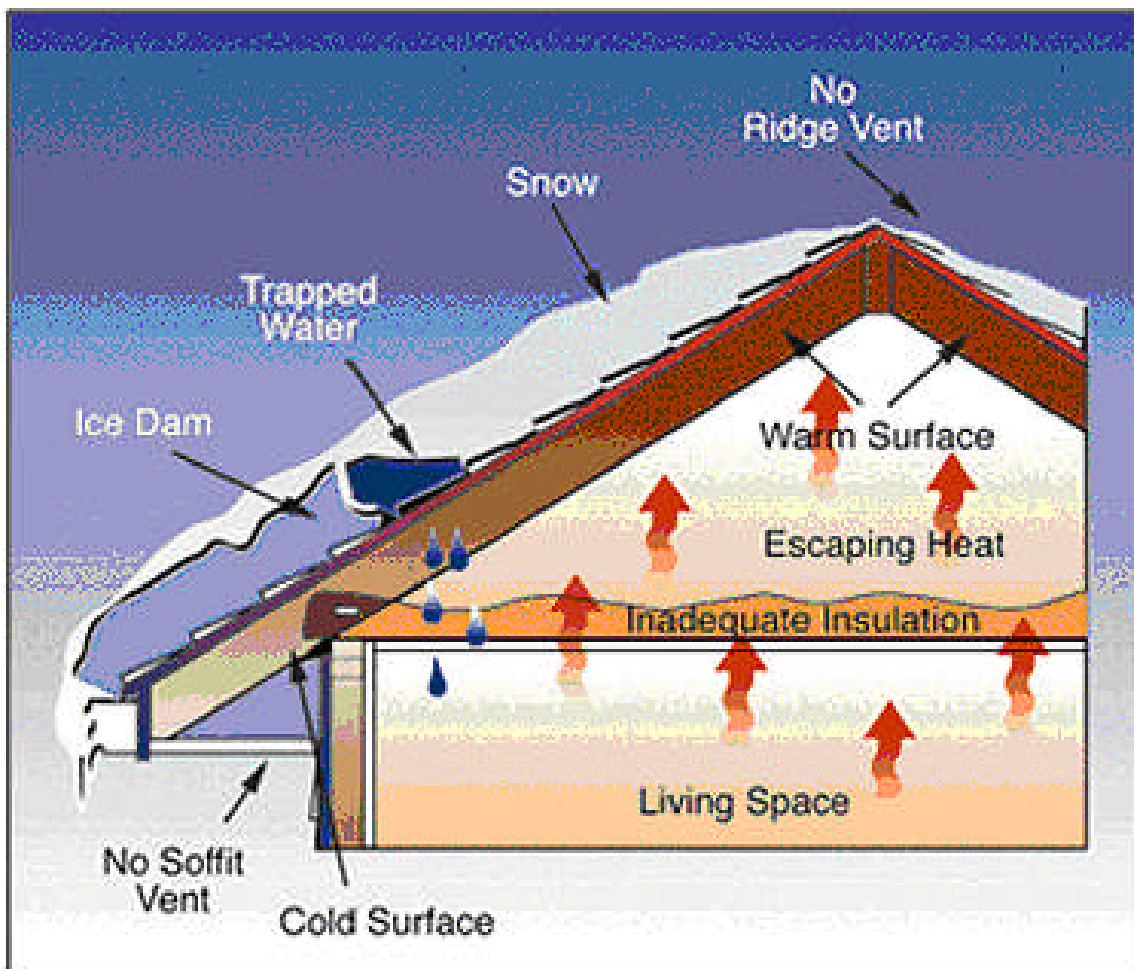
Questions and Answers on Ice Damming Causing Water Leaks

Below is a "Q & A" on Ice Dams based on the most common questions that are asked.

Q: What is an ice dam (or why do I have leaks in my unit)?

A: Ice dams are caused by heat escaping from the house and melting the snow on the upper parts of the roof. This melted snow re-freezes when it gets down to the colder eave area where there is no heat loss from the house. Compounding the problem is that the place that is most difficult to insulate properly is the area directly on top of the outside wall supporting the roof structure. Ice dams allow leakage through the roof into the soffit, fascia and wall systems. Leakage may also develop at the interior of the building, although if it does not, the damage can be concealed and go unnoticed for a considerable period. Ice dams don't occur every winter. It takes the appropriate snow accumulations and weather conditions to cause ice dams. Snow that accumulates on a roof to considerable depth, followed by temperatures just below freezing for several days, creates an environment where ice damming is likely (see diagram below).

We also have posted on the Imagineers Website "Contact Page" a video that illustrates how ice dams are formed. (Please see link http://www.imagineersllc.com/contact_us.asp)



Q: What can be done to stop the leak(s)?

A: Raking of the roofs and removing snow is a good first step, particularly the first two or 3 feet above the gutter line, where snow is built up adjacent to siding and at the point of entry if it can be determined. The snow actually acts as an insulator allowing the snow closest to the roofing surface to melt due to heat loss from the home even when temperatures outside are below freezing. We do not encourage homeowners to attempt to do this by themselves as it is extremely dangerous to be on a ladder or roof covered with snow. In most condominium associations it is prohibited. The biggest factor to help stop this problem is cooperation from the weather. Temperatures need to be warmer to help melt the snow. There are more radical methods that may be employed if conditions permit but they are not guaranteed to work and may cause more damage than any resolution.

Q: What do I need to do?

A: While the leak is active we encourage you to remove your personal property from the general area, cover anything bulky with plastic not limited to placing plastic to eliminate moisture coming in contact with the base of furniture, use buckets to catch dripping water and if the ceiling begins to sag, punch a small hole in it with a pencil sized object to let the water drain. Be sure to notify us immediately if sheetrock on ceiling or walls has fallen. You should also notify your insurance agent.

Q: Who is responsible for the damages?

A: That varies from community to community depending upon your community documents and association insurance. For several communities it is the association's responsibility to make and pay for both the exterior and interior repairs. We encourage you however to notify your personal insurance agent to put them on notice and we will likewise contact the association's carrier. Some associations require the individual homeowner to submit to their own insurance company the expense up to the value of the applicable deductible.

Q: When can my leak and damages be repaired?

A: We will make all efforts to have water extracted from carpets and floors in a timely fashion (and in accordance with contractor availability). Roof repairs cannot be done until the snow has melted and the shingles are warmer. The contractors that conduct the work will let us know when that can be or a temporary fix can be done. As for the interior repairs the normal policy is to wait until we've had a couple of storms, rain or snow following any exterior repairs or the elimination of the damming conditions, to ensure that the leak has stopped prior to making any interior repairs. While we will keep your leak on our service requests log until the job is complete, you should call the appropriate administrative assistant after several storms if there is no more evidence of water intrusion. If the leak was part of an insurance claim, we cannot proceed until given authorization from the insurance carrier.

Q: How does the repair process work?

A: If your leak is part of an insurance claim, we need to wait for authorization from the carrier. If there is a situation that presents an endangerment such as falling sheetrock, we will send someone out as soon as possible to keep the area safe. Wet sheetrock and insulation can be removed as soon as staff is available. Once we are sure the leak has stopped, and authorization granted if needed, we can then get a contractor in to make the necessary repairs. We encourage you to check periodically with the appropriate administrative assistant about scheduling and timing.

Q: What can be done if I have standing water in my carpet?

A: Once the leak has stopped, we can bring in a professional to extract the water and dry out the floor and carpet. During the leak however we would encourage you to use towels to absorb the water or wet-vacs to extract it. You should also move furniture off the wet surface to prevent staining and damage to your furniture. Pieces of plastic wrap can be applied over the bottom of furniture feet to help minimize damage if furniture is too large to move or lack of space exists to move it to. In many cases, the carpet will need to be detached and the foam padding removed and discarded. In the case of extreme flooding we might be able to send someone to extract water or use a sump pump. You might also want to consider calling your local fire department.

Q: What should I do if water is leaking over or near a light fixture electrical receptacle or switch?

A: As precautionary measure do not use the light fixture and / or electrical device. Turn off the circuit breaker to that area. Removal of the outlet or switch plate can allow the water to drain from the electrical box and allow the device to air dry. Please contact us right away if the water is entering the circuit breaker box. Do not touch the circuit breaker box if it is wet.

Q: Are there preventive measures to take for the future?

A: An assessment can be made on whether the attic or eaves can be better ventilated as a preventative measure. Your association can decide that it needs to increase your community's maintenance budget to allow for roof raking after every storm. The board and your manager should also ensure that any future roofing proposal includes an "ice and water shield" application. This is a 3 to 6 foot rubber membrane installed on the roof above the gutters prior to shingle installation. The other method is to install heating coils which melt the snow as it comes down. This however requires nearby access to electricity and would require regular attention to turn on and off. It would also need to be cleared through your town's building department and insurance companies as some municipalities do not allow heat coils and multi-family residences.

Winter 2011

This has been an unusual winter with so many storms back-to-back. Connecticut has experienced the highest January snow total on record since record keeping began over 100 years ago. Compounding matters is the lack of a significant warm-up and melting of accumulated snow.

This winter's storms, their frequency and unprecedented snow volume have taxed everyone's patience and capacity. Ice damming has been occurring on an unheard of scale, in virtually every type of housing and in every town.

We know that almost nothing is more disconcerting than watching water leak into one's home. We are attempting to prevent the formation of ice dams and we are attacking every ice dam reported to be causing damage, working with insurance carriers and, for now, patching what we can. When the water source can be eliminated and the insurance coverage is approved, we can begin the interior and exterior improvements. Those next steps usually require the cooperation of the weather as well as the people involved so the process simply takes a bit of time. We know that every day is a day too long when it's someone's home and so we are working to cut the time where ever we can.

Please be assured that we are working diligently to continue to do everything we can to address every concern you may have.