

Chicagoland Roofing Council's Winter 2011 Roof Tips for Building Owners – What to do Now??

Well, we had some snow this week. It sure looks pretty out there...but wait, what's that on my roof? It seems the snow is overhanging the eave, and there's drifts at the roof edge, that I can see.

But, was there too much snow? Will my roof collapse from the snow? Will ice dams form and back water up the roof slope, causing leaks? Is it blocking the HVAC System? What can I do now to prevent leaks in my roof from damaging Here's a few tips from the Pro's at the Chicagoland Roofing Council:

1. **Safety First** – Flat or Steep Sloped roofs are slippery. Without fall protection, it's easy to slip off the roof on a slope, that's got snow and ice on it. Plus, working at any height requires attention to prevent falls. Maybe the best answer is not to go on the roof at all. If that's the case, call a Chicagoland Roofing Council professional roofing contractor now to get the snow off your roof.
2. **Structural Capability** – Should I worry about the weight on the roof? On Low Sloped flat roofs, this can be an issue. Especially if the snow melts, forms ice, and more snow piles on top. For most roof systems, and the structure supporting it, are regulated by the building code in effect at the time of construction. Building codes recognize that we get snow in Chicago and engineer for a worst case. Structures built to building codes may not have a huge risk. However, it's good practice to get big snow off some of the roof to create drainage. More on that below.
3. **Ice Dams?** - If there are air leaks in the top floor ceiling, heat can escape into the air space, causing roof decks to warm, melting snow. When the water gets to a cold spot or the roof eave edge, it freezes. For steep slope roofs, once it freezes, then the melting snow continues to fuel water to the eave edge, which freezes into a thick block of ice. This block, causes water to backup under the shingles. Without a waterproofing membrane under the shingles, shakes, slate, tile, that seals around the nail holes, leaks will result. How far up the roof should this ice dam protection be? The International Building Code recommends 2' past the warm wall that supports the roof.
4. **Solution # 1 - Ventilation & Insulate** – Keep heat downstairs in the building! Put insulation on top of any projections into the air space or attic, to prevent the heat from downstairs from getting to the attic. Then, be sure the ventilation is engineered properly.
5. **Solution # 2 - Shovel the roof?** There are ways to shovel the roof without getting on it to prevent ice dams from forming. At many hardware stores, a 'roof shovel' with a telescoping pole allows you to pull snow off the roof without getting on it. Simply clear the roof at the edge, without scraping all the way down to the roofing material. That way, it's not damaged by the shovel. Most roofing materials and fasteners may be sensitive to cold...and may be brittle due to the cold. Contact the roofing contractor who understands manufacturer recommendations for precautions. Whether the roof is made of Asphalt Shingles, Wood Shakes, Slate, Tile, or Metal, there are things to be careful about. Low Sloped BUR, MB, and Single Ply roof membrane all have precautions.

6. **Solution #3 - Call a Professional Roofing Contractor** for snow removal, temporary repairs, and plan for the future! The Chicagoland Roofing Council Professionals are ready to come and help you prevent damage by looking at your roof now. They know how to work at height safely, and understand the precautions to take when removing some or all of the snow from the roof.

7. **Solution #4 – Get ready for this spring summer’s roofing season!!** Then, when planning permanent repairs, CHICAGOLAND ROOFING COUNCIL Members can help you understand the choices available to plan ahead for the next big snow, rain, wind or hailstorm. Now is the time to plan your spring work...so call a pro today. How do I find a Professional Roofing Contractor, and what should I look for? See ‘How to Select a Roofing Professional’ ...on Chicagoroofing.org.

These recommendations are not exhaustive and are not meant as the answer to all problems.

Visit <http://www.chicagoroofing.org> for a list of Chicago’s CHICAGOLAND ROOFING COUNCIL Member Professional Roofing Licensed Contractors.