

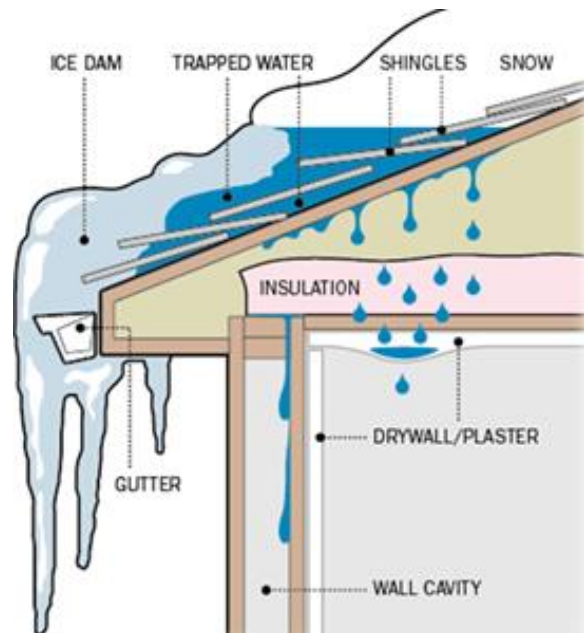
Ice Damming & Attic Rain: Home Issues to Look for Right Now

March 15, 2019

Now is the time of year where we need to start considering the effects of changing temperatures on our homes. Normally we get to enjoy fairly mild winters as the Chinooks take control of our temperatures, but this past February was brutally cold! Because of the fairly drastic change in temperature, many Albertans are noticing some unfortunate consequences on houses. Let's look at two problems that can affect us this year.

Ice Damming

The first is ice damming. Ice damming occurs on the exterior, up on your roof. It occurs when some ice creates a blockage that prevents melting water from draining properly. When some parts of your roof reach temperatures above freezing, while others stay below freezing, the uneven melting creates a combination of ice, snow, and water, and the water can sit on your roof causing leaks and damage. The variances in roof temperature can be caused by the outside temperature, but also by different things from your interior, like vents, chimneys, and air leaks.



Better built houses won't experience this issue as frequently because they have less warm air escaping. That being said, precautionary actions are the best defense in all cases. A short term solution is to keep your roof clean of snow. You can use a broom or roof rake to clear it before melting starts. A better, long term solution is to make sure your roof is up to code, and there is as little warm air leakage as possible, both between

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the main house and the attic, as well as between the attic and the roof. The goal should be to have a consistent temperature on your roof to avoid uneven melting and freezing.

Attic Rain

The second issue we want to bring your attention to is attic rain. This happens on the interior, starting in your attic, and affecting other parts of your interior, like the ceiling, walls, lights, vents, and windows. This happens when moisture in your attic accumulates and then freezes in cold temperatures. If there is only a small amount of moisture you should be fine; the frost will usually evaporate before it even melts. However, in winters like the one we just had, you can get more and more frost over the persistent cold weeks, and then when it does finally melt, you have a pool of water in your attic. This water will find a way to leak through your ceiling, giving you water stains, or ruining your lights.

Once this has started, unfortunately there is very little you can do to stop it. A dehumidifier may help, but just barely. There are preventative measures you can take though. Make sure you are running your hood fan when cooking on your stovetop and your bathroom fan when you are showering. And don't turn a humidifier on if your home is already sitting high enough; try to keep it around 25% when temperatures are low.



The ironic thing about attic rain is that it affects the newer, better built homes. The moisture gets trapped in the attic because the home is so well sealed. In older homes that are prone to drafts and air leaks, the excess moisture is able to escape (which obviously comes at the expense of other issues). The best form of prevention is to keep your attic properly ventilated

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We, as well as a large amount of Albertans have been dealing with these issues lately in many homes, old and new. When we go to talk to customers about a potential renovation, we like to look at the roof. It may not have much to do with the beautiful, aesthetic renovation you had planned, but roof and ceiling updates can give you peace of mind and lead to a healthier home in the future.

If you would like to discuss options to avoid these problems in the future, give us a call. We would love to talk to you about improving your home.

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