

# Ice Dams

**By: Inspector Weeks 613.290.3697**

I have been receiving countless calls recently due to the abundance of snow we have been having and the problems it is creating with regards to roofs. Many of the callers are experiencing ice damming and are generally concerned about the amount of snow and ice build-up on their roofs. So, this month I would like to discuss winter roofs.

This year we have had an above average amount of snow. The latest tally is over 9 feet of snow. This extra snow has caused a fair bit of trouble to some local homes. The problem is the dreaded ice build-up ! Ice dams do not necessarily occur every winter and some houses are more prone to ice damming than others. These dams normally occur after periods of heavy snow fall when day time temperatures are at or slightly above freezing while night time temperatures are below freezing. Ice dams are most common on low slope roofs or roofs which change from a high slope to a low slope. The largest dams tend to form over unheated areas, such as eaves and porches. Ice damming occurs when snow and ice collect in a certain area of the roof, often the eaves. Melting snow on the upper portion of the roof cannot drain properly as it is trapped behind the ice dam. If the dam is large enough and sufficient water collects, it will back up under the shingles and leak into the eaves or worse, into the exterior walls or the building interior. Some say a picture is worth a thousand words. These pictures should help explain this winter phenomena.

Ice dams can be prevented. With a combination of proper ventilation, adequate insulation along with shingle underlayment ( ice and water shield ) appropriate for the roof, most problem areas can be rectified. Doing a roofing repair job merely to building code is often not enough. Each roof must be examined as a system and how it relates to the rest of the house. That is what Home Inspection is all about. After all, there is little worse than a leaky roof !!

I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections [PWHI@sympatico.ca](mailto:PWHI@sympatico.ca) or by phone at 613.290.3697.

**Peter Weeks** has been a Chelsea resident for 19 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing **Residential Home Inspections** for about four years. He is an Associate Member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB in Good Standing.

Peter Weeks is a fully insured and qualified Home Inspector registered with the Royal LePage Relocation Services Program.

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