

Spring Thaw Maintenance

By: Inspector Weeks 613.290.3697

Wow, Is it just me or have we had a lot of snow ?? Since last month's article I have been inundated with calls and emails about snow loads and concerns about roofs. I have tried to reply to as many as possible but some may have slipped through. Rest assured this snow will melt eventually.

The main concerns by this time have hopefully been addressed and those of you needing to shovel off your roofs have done so. Now we have a new issue. What to do about all the snow half way up your first floor windows ?? This has got to go somewhere when it melts and you do not want it in your basement. The heat given off from your house will melt an area around the perimeter of your home about 5 to 6 inches out. This creates a space for the water to go between the basement wall and the area affected by ground frost . This is often the first point of entry for melting snow. The good news is that the ground frost is minimal this year, perhaps as little as 6 inches down. This regions normal frost line is about 4 ½ feet down. What that means is that last falls early snowfall insulated the ground thus preventing the frost from pushing deep into the ground. Most of this years massive melt will hopefully be absorbed into the ground rather than running away, a big contributor to widespread flooding. Those of you on lakes that have been experiencing lowering water levels over the past years, mother nature will be topping them up this spring. Realistically though as individuals we do need to be concerned about the imminent thaw this spring and find ways to keep it out of our homes.

It is time to be proactive. Check that sump pump in the basement NOW. Make sure it works and that the drainage pipes are secure and not leaking. If you have a back-up pump make certain it works too. If you usually get spring water in the basement, count on this spring to be a good one. You may want to start now to move things away in the vulnerable areas of your home. Clear away some of that snow, close around the outside of your house (perhaps originally from your roof) and dig out the eavestrough down spouts. If you add spring extensions, find them and have them ready for the big thaw and direct them away from your house. If your house has window wells, clear them out, this is often a point of entry. If you have catch basins on or near your property make sure they are clear and flowing. Any culverts that would keep the

flow water away from your home need to be free flowing. Be a kid again and go out and chip away at the ice and re-route the water away from the building when it starts to melt. These hints are meant to get you thinking. Not all homes are vulnerable but this years spring thaw will be a real test. Be pro-active rather than re-active !!



I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections 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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