



Winter Weather and Your Roof - With the great deal of snow falling on Chicago's buildings over the last several weeks, there has been many inquiries on what building owners need to know.

1. How do we know if the roof is safely holding the snow load?

- a. Building code regulations are in place in municipalities, adopted by city councils and take into account the snow loads expected.
- b. If the roof has had additional equipment added not included in the original design or more than 2 roofs on it, there could be risk for a collapse – low or steep slope.
- c. Most of the current collapses came from bowstring truss 'barrel' shaped rooftops, mainly in commercial buildings, where buildings were in disrepair. These 'barrel roofs' with deep valleys at the outside walls allow uneven accumulation of snow.

2. Clearing Snow Safely? Roofs are dangerous to be on, even in good weather.

- a. Ladders can slip under you.
- b. The roof is slippery and can be sloped.
- c. Falls from height cause serious injuries.
- d. Call a professional CRCA Member Contractor, licenses by the State of IL who is experienced and trained to work at heights and understands how to protect the roofing material under the snow while shoveling. Damage come from inexperienced roof snow shovelers. The leaks come when it melts.

3. Clearing the Roof safely.

- a. On steep slope roofs that can be reached from the ground, (1 story typically), long handled roof shovels or "rakes" are best when used from the ground. The homeowner might be able to do this.
- b. For low slope roofs, the roof membrane under the snow can be damaged by shovels. Make sure if shoveling, not to damage the roof below. if unsure, call the professional CRCA Member IL Licensed Roofing Contractor for help.

4. What if your roof leaks close to eave edges at outside walls?

- a. Ice dams occur when the attic warm air melts the snow above. The snow melt runs down the roof to the unheated overhang soffit, then freezes. Water keeps coming from up above and backs up under the shingles as it hits the 'dam', causing leaks.
- b. The fix short term is:
 - i. Remove the snow above the ice dam with snow rakes and other similar tools. Never use a torch.
 - ii. Place ice melt compatible with the roof in fabric that can melt the ice dam. Consider having a licensed professional roofing contractor do this.
- c. The long-term solution might be a new roof that includes:
 - i. Ice barrier membrane - using the code required ice barrier membrane at the eave edge, and 2'+ upslope past the outside wall below.
 - ii. Ventilation and insulation – to keep the attic cool to eliminate the ice melt and ultimately preventing ice dams.
- d. Contact a CRCA Roofing Professional for repairs. Visit CRCA.org / member list today!