



# NEWSLETTER



## Ice Damming, what is it?

During our home inspections, sometimes we see signs of water leaks in the ceiling where the ceiling meets the roof. This is usually caused by “Ice Damming”. Ice damming is caused by snow melting on the roof and then dripping down towards the gutters where it freezes again and builds up ice and a little “pond” forms on the lower portion of the roof and gutters. The pond gets bigger as more and more snow melts and then freezes down by the gutter. Eventually, the water backs up under the roof shingles which causes the leaks.

What makes this happen? The attic is too warm, thereby causing the snow to melt on the roof. If you do have this problem, we recommend that you deal with it because it can cause wood rot and mold above the ceiling and inside the wall. It can also attract wood-destroying insects like termites.

Because your attic is too warm, you have an opportunity to save energy while fixing the ice damming issue. The first approach to fixing the problem is to stop warm air from getting into your attic. That means sealing openings between your attic and the living space. This may require additional insulation and/or blocking any openings between the living space and the attic, such as openings around electrical wires, high-hat light fixtures, plumbing pipes, dryer, and bathroom vents. By the way, sometimes bathroom vent fans and clothing dryers discharge warm air directly into the attic. Ideally, the attic temperature should be similar to the exterior temperature.

Of course, this is a very brief description of ice damming and there is a lot more information on the web if you’re interested in learning more about the subject.

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