

## Hot Tips for Preventing Cold Weather Damage to Your Home

In Saskatchewan, snow falls regularly, with interspersed periods of melting and freezing which can lead to ice dams, causing considerable damage to your home.

### *What causes an ice dam?*

Snow acts like an insulation layer on the roof above your attic. When snow melts above a warmed attic, water moves down to the cooler roof edge and soffit and freezes. Unless this water is allowed to drain properly, the resulting freezing can create ice dams on your roof.

Ice dams can cause damage to the shingles and soffit on your roof. As the ice dam spreads up the roof, water eventually works its way under shingles and enters the attic.

Once water enters the attic, there is a risk of damage to the roof, ceilings, walls and contents of your home. If ceiling insulation becomes wet, it loses its insulation value and can lead to a rise in the temperature of the attic, accelerating the growth of the ice dam.

### *Preventing ice dams*

Proper ventilation and insulation of your attic helps keep the attic cool and may help avoid ice dams. Exhaust fans, ducts, chimneys, attic hatches and pipe penetrations can leak heat into your attic and contribute to the problem. Sealing around these areas can help. Contact a reputable contractor in your area for assistance.

**Each Fall:** Thoroughly clean all leaves and debris from your home's gutters and downspouts. This will allow the melting snow to flow into the gutters and through the downspouts as intended.

**Once Winter Arrives:** Keep the snow load on your roof to a minimum. Keeping the snow off your roof helps reduce the chance of your roof collapsing due to excessive snow load.

Keep gutters and downspouts free of snow, ice buildup and icicles. This will allow a ready path for melted snow on your roof to drain, eliminating the potential for ice dam formation. This will also reduce the weight of ice and snow on the gutters and downspouts. Excessive weight can cause gutters and downspouts to pull away from the house or be damaged.