

# — ALL ABOUT — ICE DAMS

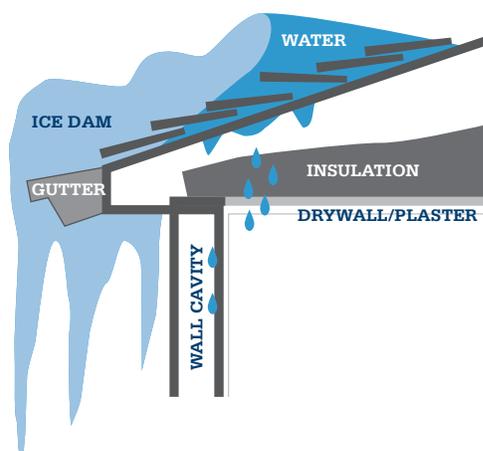
**Do you know what an ice dam can do to your home?** An ice dam can do serious damage to both your roof and the inside of your house. It can also destroy your gutters and downspouts. If the ice dam breaks free, it can pull shingles and gutters off with it, and can damage anything it falls on like shrubs, windowsills, cars, pets, and people! And, if the roof sheathing stays wet, mildew can form and rot the sheathing. Not good.

## HOW DOES AN ICE DAM HAPPEN?

Ice dams happen when water from melting snow runs down the surface of your roof and refreezes. As the cycle of freezing and melting continues, ice builds up and begins to “dam.” Sometimes the pooled water finds its way under shingles and refreezes, lifting the shingles from the roof deck and creating a spot for water to enter your house.

---

## ROOF WITH AN ICE DAM



## HOW TO PREVENT OR MINIMIZE ICE DAMS:

*The time to prevent ice dams is before the weather gets bad. A qualified contractor can help by:*

- Sealing all points where warm air leaks from the living space into the attic.
- Insulating the attic space well enough to prevent conduction and convection of heat through the ceilings in the living space.
- Installation of proper ventilation in the attic to include soffit ventilation and ridge ventilation to ensure heat that does sneak into the attic is carried away.

---

**Cleaning out your gutters, being prepared, sealing air leaks, insulating your attic, and properly venting your attic space can save you money and headaches when the cold air descends. Your contractor can recommend the best options to insulate and seal your attic space—and present the best way to get rid of any warm air that sneaks into your attic. It's a one-two punch to winter's wrath!**

---

# **—WHAT TO DO ABOUT— ICE DAMS**

## **HOW TO FIGHT THEM:**

### ***Before the first flake:***

- After the leaves have fallen, have your gutters cleaned so that when it snows, it will melt and go down the gutter like it's supposed to.
- Buy a roof rake before they sell out (and avoid paying top dollar!).

### ***After a lot of flakes:***

- Keep gutters clear of snow, including the bottom of the downspouts so that when snow melts the water flows freely.
- Use your roof rake to remove snow from the roof and gutter line. Danger: Be aware of electrical wiring!

---

**Some people remove the bottom section of downspouts so that they don't get clogged and back up if they are buried in the snow!**

---

## **IF YOU GET AN ICE DAM:**

- Use a melting agent like calcium chloride—available at your local hardware store. Do not use rock salt! Rock salt can damage paint, “drain” pipes, and plants beneath the eaves—wherever the salty water drains. As always, when dealing with any chemicals, be mindful of children and pets!

---

**Helpful hint: To make a pathway for the water to drain, take a leg from an old pair of panty hose, fill with calcium chloride, tie it off, and lay it vertically across the ice dam. This will slowly melt its way through the ice dam, clearing a path for the melted water underneath.**

---

- If you have to chip the ice away, never use an axe, blowtorch, or hammer (or anything that may damage the shingles) and again, always be mindful of the location of all electric wiring. Use a ladder to access the area and have a partner hold the ladder steady—watch for falling icicles!
- As always, if you think the situation is unsafe or dangerous, consider hiring a licensed and insured contractor to complete the work.



**ARBELLA AND YOUR AGENT: PREPARING YOU FOR THE WINTER AND HELPING YOU STAY SAFE!**