

Take a Load off

With the snow continuing to fall this winter, it's important to keep in mind that roof collapse from snow load can occur, causing damage to your home.

How roof collapses happen

Building designs determine how much loading a roof can withstand. Although a collapse can occur on any roof surface, flat roofs are more susceptible to snow and ice accumulation and ice blockages.



Other contributing factors

Clogged drains, gutters and downspouts – On any roof surface, a clogged drain will prevent water from rain or melted snow to leave. Rain or melting snow from warm weather following a snowfall can be trapped on roofs because drains are still frozen.

Ice dams – On sloped roofs, heat radiating from the attic space can melt snow on the roof which will then refreeze by the gutters, completely blocking them off. These ice dams allow snow and water to remain on the roof where it can force itself into the building structure; here it can cause rotted wood, mildew, mould or damaged insulation. Over time, the rotted roofing structure will be weakened thus decreasing the snow load capacity of the roof.

Age – Older roof coverings will deteriorate, sealants will shrink, and water leaking will occur.



You're back.



Warning signs that may indicate a potential roof collapse

- doors that pop open or doors and windows that are difficult to open
- bowed utility pipes or electrical conduits at the ceiling
- creaking, cracking, or popping sounds
- severe roof leaks
- look for signs such as sagging roofs
- new cracks in walls or ceiling

If warning signs are present and you feel you are at risk for a collapsed roof, leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1. It is better to be safe!

Steps to prevent roof collapse

- keep drains, gutters, and downspouts clear of ice and debris. The use of heat cables can help to accomplish this.
- ensure downspouts are shortened enough not to freeze at the bottom
- do not shovel or plow snow against downspouts
- repair or replace roof covering before it leaks
- inspect the roof immediately after major storms
- remove snow from the roof (contact a roofing contractor for safe snow removal methods)

If you're not sure whether your roof is susceptible to collapse due to snow load, consider seeking the advice of a home inspector or building contractor.



You're back.