

# Major Leaks or Ice Dams?!

Justin Cooper, Vice President  
Total Roofing & Construction Services, Inc.



Every winter we see icicles hanging on gutters or eaves, especially living in the Midwest. As much as we believe icicles are another aspect of a “winter wonderland”, they can become a winter nightmare. Icicles can and will cause damage to your house. Types of damage are falling gutters, loose shingles, and water pouring into your house.

All scenarios are detrimental, however water entering your house is the worst. Water will affect your insulation inside the attic (lose its R-value, lead to mold), damage paint, deteriorate the drywall, ruin wooden joists, and cause headaches.

## Causes of an Ice Dam:

- Heat collecting inside your attic begins warming the roof
- Sitting snow begins to melt from the heated roof and freezes on cold eaves & gutters.
- Ice accumulates along the eaves, forming the dam. After the dam is created the water from melted snow above begins going underneath current dam and enters the house.
- Water leaks through shingles, rots roof decking, fills insulation, and then jeopardizes interior dry wall.
- (Interior damage will be noticeable after weeks or months. Remember for water to enter your house it has passed through numerous home products decking, insulation, drywall, paint, & fascia. Numerous items may be damaged that are not noticed)

## Total Ice Dam Fix:

Our project manager’s will assess each situation prior to providing an estimate. Cost for fixing ice damming depends on the severity of the ice dams (5-9 foot icicles), height of the building, and amount of snow collected. We recommend the homeowner be home prior to starting the job. Recommendation is so we have water access to begin a job.

**Duration:**

Expected time of completion varies on the size of the project and the type of roofing system. Roofs with metal or slate require us to work from our ladder. The combination of winter elements and slick surfaces demand us to take extra precaution.

**Ice Damming Procedure:**

- Rake & Shovel collected snow off the roof (At least 6 feet\*)
- Get rid of any dangerous hanging icicles immediately
- Steam Gutter edges with our industry leading damming machine
- Inspect quality of the shingles and gutters upon completion
- What we need from the homeowner:
- Information regarding areas with noticeable interior damage (damaged shingles/roof)

**How to Avoid Calling Us in the Future:**

Keep your gutters clean: Gutters and downspouts need to be completely cleaned before winter. If these items are filled with debris then melted snow will have no place to go.

Decrease sources of heat entering attic: Insulate ceiling lights (canned lights, fans, electrical boxes, & etc.). Lights naturally generate heat and if they lack appropriate insulation than heat will go into the attic.

**Additional Issues:**

Uninsulated attic hatches, ductwork, and improper exhaust units. House units that generate heat will cause issues if they're located in the attic (furnace or heaters).

**Improve Attic Insulation:**

Increase your attic insulation! Does your home have the same insulation it did 20 years ago? Add new insulation to the attic and increase the R-value. Going above and beyond in R-Value will benefit your home for other reasons than ice dams. Check your local building codes to make sure you have adequate insulation.

**Ventilation, Ventilation, Ventilation, & Ventilation!**

A properly ventilated home is crucial for your house during all seasons, but especially winter. Call a contractor or research the Internet to see if your home is properly ventilated. A lack of airflow spells disaster for your entire house.

**Written by:**

**Justin Cooper**  
**Vice President**  
**Total Roofing & Construction Services, Inc.**  
**833 E. 158th Street**  
**Dolton, IL 60419**

