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SNOW STORM SAVVY

Dominion Club

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Ice Dams on Roof and Gutters

Ice dams can occur when snow is deep on the roof, and the temperature fluctuates enough to start a thaw, then re-freeze again at night. Other reasons, cited by experts, include lack of adequate attic insulation, which allows snow on the roof to be warmed enough from below, to let melting happen on the underside of a snow pack on the roof.

Subsequently, damage may occur as the frozen gutters, spouts and drains below an "ice dam" cause water to back up into the attic and start to come through the ceiling.

Much information may be found about preventing and curing ice dams by putting "Ice Dams on roof and gutters" into Google. Samples of sites returned are:



Ice dam blocking water run off

www.ehow.com/how_115675_prevent-ice-dams.html

www.waterloov.com/Ice-Dam-Press-Release.htm

Some of the sites returned from a query to Google are roofing contractors. Most are not local, but, they do offer various explanations of what "ice dams" are, prevention, and their particular cures. Choosing the right "cure" is a personal choice.

One thing that exacerbates the problem is gutters that are full of leaves, stems, sticks and pine needles. If not kept clean and clear, these can aggravate the problem. After they are cleaned, one should be sure water goes all the way through the spouting and to the drain as well. Of course, this is a preventative maintenance suggestion for warmer weather. During the snow storm is not a good time to do this.

Full and/or frozen gutters may weigh enough to pull them off the house.

NOTE: While the DC board DOES NOT recommend any particular approach, we do suggest that **IF YOU CHOOSE** to use the method of drilling a hole in the ceiling to drain the water into a bucket and keep it from spreading in the attic - **DO NOT USE AN ELECTRIC DRILL** - else thee may join the famous list of the Darwin Awardees.

Sump Pump – Enable Proper Function

The Dominion Club website (www.dominionclub.org) provides an excellent video, entitled "Sump Pump Outlet Blockage", which shows how to open the emergency outlet of your sump pump, in the event the street sump outlet or the below-ground home-to-street pipe freezes shut.

An additional step to redirect the sump water would be the use of a sump pump discharge hose attachment, to direct the water away from your foundation and/or that of the neighboring

house. A note and picture of this can also be found on the above mentioned DC website in the HOME MAINTENANCE tab by clicking on "[Das Vinter-Has](#)" and scrolling down to the item about the sump pump.

If this temporary solution is needed for a protracted time during freezing temperatures, the hose should be examined daily; to be sure it is clear of ice and that it too isn't blocked.

Finally, try to keep the outlet at the curb open. Once you know where the outlet is, it's just a matter of digging the snow and ice away from the outlet hole and reach in to pull-out any accumulated ice. Then, at the curb, create a pattern where the water can be directed to its natural downhill drainage along the curb. It's recommended this be done before a hard freeze sets in.

HINT: Owners should probably establish a visual alignment between the sump curb outlet and a fixed reference point on your house. Going forward, you'll know about where it is. Then, you can "sound it out" by using a pole to plunge into the snow/ice bank to strike the curb and listen for an echo or sound that will let you know you're near the outlet. The visual alignment and "sounding-out" technique will save you lots of time hunting for the outlet.

The same approach should be taken for the downspout drains at the curb.

During a thaw, you'll want as much water as possible to get off your roof and out of your spouts.



Curb drain from sump pump and down spouts

Open Snow-Packed Clothes Dryer and Furnace Vents

Snowstorms of 6" required the use of snow blowers to clear our driveways.

If you have a clothes dryer and/or furnace vent on the driveway side of your house, you may need to gently clear any blown and packed snow away from the plastic vent(s) to ensure their proper functioning.

This will help prevent back pressure which could cause the clothes dryer vent duct to disconnect (if you're lucky) or cause the dryer to overheat (not so lucky).

The furnace vent needs to be cleared to provide outside air to the furnace burners during their heat-up process (gas burners running.....).

Please note, not all homes have the vents on the "driveway side" of the house.



Clothes dryer vent should not be covered with snow