



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 • Canton, New York 13617-1476

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Press Release

Date: March 2025

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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315-386-2325

St. Lawrence County Public Health Guidance for Preventing Roof Ice Dams

Canton, NY –Warmer days are up ahead as spring rapidly approaches. The changing weather conditions and the fluctuating temperatures puts the homes of many St. Lawrence County residents at risk of forming ice dams. The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department (SLCPHD) encourages residents to take certain measures to protect their homes from ice dams.

What is an Ice Dam?

An ice dam is a ridge of ice, which forms at the edge of your roof and prevents snow or water from draining. Ice dams occur when heat from your attic or other section of your house warms your roof, causing snow to melt. The melted snow flows down to the colder part of the roof and refreezes, creating a dam-like structure. Water can pool underneath roof shingles and cause leaks in your home, damaging ceilings, walls, insulation, and roof shingles. Many ice dams go unnoticed by residents, however you can take the necessary steps to protect your home!

Why do Ice Dams form?

- Temperature fluctuations
- Poor ventilation/ insulation
- Air leaks
- Heavy snow buildup on your roof



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Problems associated with ice dams:

- Water stained ceilings
- Dislodged roof shingles
- Sagging ice-filled gutters
- Peeling paint (inside and outside)
- Damaged plaster/drywall
- Wet or damp insulation
- Allergies or respiratory illnesses from mold and mildew growth
- Rotting framing
- Injury from falling ice

Tips to protect your home from ice dams:

- Clean all leaves, sticks, and other debris from your home's gutters and down spouts.
- Reduce the amount of snow on your roof safely.
- Keep gutters and down spouts free of icicles and snow.
- Evaluate the insulation and ventilation in your attic.
- Add more insulation or install attic vents to improve air flow.
- Seal all air leaks.

Damage Remediation

- Do not repair interior damage until walls and ceilings are dry. Open windows or use fans if needed
- Make sure to contact a professional for assistance, if needed
- Evaluate insulation in home, tests can be done to evaluate how airtight your ceiling is or use infrared cameras to look for excessive heat loss in your ceiling.
- Reach out to the North Country Clean Energy Hub or contractors for an energy audit.



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Further information:

<https://www.weather.gov/grr/roofIceDams#:~:text=Ice%20dams%20are%20most%20common,r efreezes%20when%20temperatures%20drop%20overnight.>

<https://extension.umn.edu/protecting-home-rain-and-ice/dealing-and-preventing-ice-dams>

<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Residential-Energy-Assessment-Programs>

<https://northcountrycleanenergyhub.org/aboutthehub>

<https://www.nachi.org/ice-dams.htm>