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Protecting your Home Against Snow & Ice



Snow, ice and sub-zero temperatures are hallmarks of the Canadian winter. Canada's winters are as diverse as its landscape. Coastal regions, like southern British Columbia, may experience milder, rainy winters, while parts of Ontario and the Atlantic provinces often see heavy snow, ice storms, and freezing rain.

Across the country, temperatures can dip well below freezing, sometimes even reaching -40°C during extreme cold snaps. This presents challenges for homeowners across the country.

Common Winter Challenges & How to Prevent Them

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR)

identifies three key winter weather risks for homes:

1. Roof collapse: Excessive snow and ice accumulation can add significant weight to a roof, potentially leading to structural strain and collapse. Regularly clearing snow can help to prevent overloading.

2. Ice dams: Ice buildup along roof edges can prevent meltwater from draining properly, leading to leaks and structural issues. Keeping gutters clear and ensuring proper attic ventilation can reduce this risk of ice dams forming.

3. Frozen pipes: Water freezing in pipes can cause them to burst, leading to flooding. Insulating exposed pipes and maintaining indoor temperatures can prevent freezing.



Proactive Steps to Protect Your Home:

Taking the right precautions can protect your home and minimize winter-related disruptions in your day-to-day life. Here are some key preventative measures:

- **Insulate walls and attics** to retain heat and improve energy efficiency
- **Inspect roofs and gutters** to clear debris and check for damage that could lead to leaks or ice dams
- **Insulate exposed pipes** to prevent freezing and bursting during cold snaps
- **Seal doors and windows** to reduce heat loss and drafts
- **Maintain heating systems** to ensure efficiency and reliability throughout the season
- **Secure backup power and heating sources** in case of winter storms and outages
- **Prepare for snow removal** by having the right tools (such as snow rakes and non-corrosive de-icers) and contacts for professional services, including licensed and insured snow removal contractors, who have the right equipment, safety training and experience to get the job done safely

It is worth checking your local government website, public works department, and utility providers for region-specific guidance on winterizing your home.

Homeowners in Ontario's "snow belt" region, for example, may need additional tips on managing excessive snow loads caused by lake-effect snow and snow squalls, while those in the Atlantic provinces may benefit from expert advice on ice storm preparedness and ice dam prevention.

Harsh winter weather is an inevitable part of life in Canada, but with the right preparation, you can protect your home and go about your daily life without fear or stress of winter-related property damage. A little preparation goes a long way in keeping your home safe, warm, and ready for whatever challenges winter brings.

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